

**INDIVIDUAL PRAYER
AS A WORKING-FORCE**

The Heaven-Life

or

Stimulus for Two Worlds

By the

Rev. David Gregg, D.D.

*Pastor of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church,
Brooklyn*

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This little volume is a careful study of what the Heaven-Life presupposes, its occupations, as indicated by the demands of personality, and the reactionary and stimulating influence of the Heaven-Life upon the present life, and of the Earth-Life upon the future life. The whole idea of the book is the comfort and stimulus to be derived from a vivid apprehension of "the glory that is reserved."

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Individual Prayer As a Working-Force

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Call for Faith," "The Heaven-Life," etc., etc.*



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I

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM

"And Abraham said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there? And God said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake."—GEN. 18: 32.



I

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM

ABRAMHAM is called "The father of the faithful;" he might just as truly be called "The father of great prayer and of those who offer great prayer." We may regard him as the pioneer in the prayer line, for his is the first great prayer in the Bible. It is a remarkable historical fact that most of the notable prayers which have come down the ages are those which have been offered by the descendants of Abraham.

Looking into some of the famous books of Greek and Roman antiquity we find that while there is great intellect in these old writings there is also great poverty of prayer. Compared with the Hebrews, the Greeks and Romans knew not how to pray. They were

afraid to offer anything beyond the most commonplace petitions. They had no courage, no largeness, no richness towards God, and their prayers were consequently timid, fearful, and small. Where in all the classics, outside of the literature of the Hebrews, is there a single magnificent, inspirational, and soul-developing prayer? Name one that has become popular—one which men read over and over for the purpose of spiritual education! But when you come to look into Hebrew literature you find many prayers of this type, for here you find also the one living and true God. Here, too, you find great lives inspired by the living and true God. What a splendid wealth of petition and of holy confidence in God do we see in the prayers of Abraham, David, Paul and Jesus! But these were Hebrews! We are dealing now with Abraham the Hebrew. His great prayer is before us. In the study of it three things claim our attention—The occasion which called out the prayer; the prayer itself; and the lessons which the prayer carries in it.

I. THE OCCASION OF THE PRAYER.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, because of their exceeding great sin which cried to heaven, were doomed by the Lord to utter extermination. This was the occasion that called forth the prayer of Abraham.

Every sin has a cry in it and that cry calls for judgment. Your conscience tells you this. The judgment demanded will be reached sooner or later because the omnipotent and omniscient and just God is the moral Governor of the universe. This is the interpretation of that sight which Abraham saw when he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah—when, “Lo! the smoke of the country went up like the smoke of a furnace.” In the Scripture before us we see the moral Governor exercising His functions. Judgment occupies the largest place in the record, it is true; but He holds judgment back as long as possible, and when He can hold it back no longer He mercifully discriminates. The sin of Sodom had long been echoing amid the

vaults of heaven and God had long kept back the storm of fire. When the infliction of judgment became an absolute necessity God discriminated and saved Lot—although if Lot had been a God-fearer of the Abraham type he could have saved the city. While God discriminates yet this fact shines out,—all sin is punished, and all sin entails loss. And this is so not only in the lives of the unregenerated but in those of the regenerated also. While the wicked Sodomites are smitten into ashes, Lot, that inconsistent man of God, suffers the loss of his earthly all, and is compelled to flee empty-handed from Sodom.

Scripture permits us to hear God talk aloud, just as it permits us to hear Abraham talk aloud. When judgment became necessary the question with God was, Shall I tell Abraham? Or, to put the question more correctly, How can I keep from telling Abraham my secret? Shall he know nothing of it until he hear the noises and see the sights? The sky ablaze, the air pierced by bolts of fire, the earth trembling under a terrific blow—

shall these be Abraham's first intimation? A whole city unexpectedly destroyed! That would throw Abraham's soul into tumult. Impelled by the impulses of the intimate friendship which existed between Him and Abraham, God determined to tell Abraham all, and for these reasons: (a) Abraham was His friend and God had already showed him many favors. Thus He had led Abraham to expect much from Him, and God never disappoints lawful expectations nor shocks implicit repose. When one favor arrives it is a prophecy that another favor is on the way. (b) This very land was Abraham's by promise. He therefore had a right to know why part of it was destroyed. God is perfectly fair. He wanted to be questioned by Abraham, for He knew that He could stand questioning. (c) He had set Abraham at the head of a dispensation and had appointed him to train his great covenant family. It was therefore necessary that Abraham should know the moral of the destruction of the cities of the plain in order that he might instruct posterity aright.

God meant Abraham to use this as an object-lesson for the coming generations who were to live within sight of the Dead Sea.

In this destruction the Hebrews were virtually warned of every judgment that ever overtook them. The perpetual moan of the Dead Sea simply means that sin inevitably issues in judgment. If the Hebrews had improved the lesson of the destruction of the cities of the plain, they would have escaped the invasion of the army of Sennacherib and the Babylonish captivity. Abraham was the prophet of his age. He stood between God and His contemporaries and was to them the vehicle of heaven's mind and its interpreter.

If the awful significance of the approaching catastrophe was to be understood with any certainty it was a fitting thing that the voice of God should first reveal its inner causes to the one earthly ear that was open to that voice. This fitting thing God did.

II. THE PRAYER ITSELF.

No sooner was the coming judgment dis-

closed to Abraham than his mind leaped into intense activity. His best emotions were stirred to their depths; his whole nature yearned to save. He threw himself—all his prayer faculty, faith, and sense of justice—between the condemned and their doom. He reached forth the hand of prayer and took hold of the thunderbolt of judgment which was sweeping through the sky Sodomward, and held it in mid air for half a day while he pled with God for its recall.

Abraham had had a grand preparation for his prayer. He had just been in communion and fellowship with God until his whole spiritual nature was keenly alive. He had been talking with God and passed thence into the utterance of his wonderful petitions.

All grand prayer has its causes. It grows out of communion with God. It grows out of a right knowledge of God, and this is the first requisite of prayer. Without correct views of Him we pray to a mere phantom, a being of our fancy, an abstraction. Without this requisite knowledge we cannot

put that heart, life, or intensity into our prayer which we put into it when we see God as He is. Abraham dealt with God as He is. To him God was not a mere law of nature, not a mere power nor an abstraction. To him God was a person who feels and thinks and talks and loves and rules. The whole aim of Abraham's prayer was to set God out in His true character and to vindicate His moral attributes.

When God reveals His purpose He startles Abraham's moral nature; for he reads the divine being through his own feelings. There are certain things which he feels impossible for himself and he is morally certain that God can no more do these things than he can. The exclamation preceding his prayer shows this: "That be far from me, Lord, to act after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked—that be far from Thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" His question is not an intellectual speculation; it is a thing of the conscience, and its settlement is

needful to give rest and satisfaction to the moral life of the man. Abraham had grasped the principle which is a powerful factor in God's government—*the tares are continued because of the wheat*. The presence of the good wards off the judgment which would overtake the bad. For example, your home is godless; but still, blessings rest upon it. Do you know why? It is because you have a pious little child. She is a Sabbath-school scholar; she is a praying daughter of the King. It is her presence in the home that wards off evil and secures good. Or it may be there is a praying wife or mother in your home. Such a child, wife or mother is an Abrahamic intercessor.

Why does the patriarch say, "Far be it from Thee, Lord, to slay the righteous with the wicked"? He says it because he feels it. His renewed nature says that the righteous should not be treated as the wicked. Out of the clear depths of his conscience he looked up into the clear depths of heaven and there saw a moral nature enthroned over men

which was at least as upright, as fair, and as true as his own. Nor did Abraham err in this. That Jehovah neither resented nor disappointed the appeal of His servant, is a wonderful confirmation of a man's right to reason from the intuitions of his own moral being to the character and ways of Him who made man. To each successive question God returned a calm assent. "I will do it for the sake of so many." As far as the courage or the justice of Abraham made bold to go, God's higher and more merciful justice went with him. When the patriarch stopped short at ten, God did not stop short at ten. He saved Lot and as many of his home as would consent to be saved, and these He fairly drove to salvation.

It is written in the next chapter, "God remembered Abraham and brought forth Lot for his sake." Let us not lose sight of the fact that in the exercise of His redeeming power, God exceeded Abraham's request. Like Abraham, the child of God has in himself a revelation of God. The new nature which

the Holy Spirit gives him contains it. In it and through it God speaks, acts, and communicates Himself by all those feelings which are good and pure, and which incite to noble praying and noble acting. God's treatment of Abraham evidences that He holds it important to secure the moral approbation of His creatures. God does not wish to excite moral controversy against Himself in any human conscience. He respects man's moral instincts. He encourages our honest scrutiny for He knows that if in things understood we see that righteousness is the habitation of His throne we will trust Him in things not understood.

But let us centre our thoughts more closely upon the prayer itself. It is the finished work of a finished workman. Abraham is one hundred years old. He embodies within himself a whole century—a century of fellowship with God, of broad experience, and of prayer-culture. The prayer is the climax of all his past drill at the Throne of Grace. It is the flower of his spiritual life. Back of it lies all

the growth and discipline of the man. This is the reason that it is a perfect marvel of skill and has the beauty of a finished work of art. While it is an extemporized effort it is at the same time one that sums up a century of holy living—the bursting of the century plant into bloom. But the flower does credit to the plant of a hundred years. It is full of heart, full of emotion, and full of profound and bold importunity. It is a great anguish of desire. It is an exponent of the perseverance of man and of the patience of God. A beautiful union of the divine and the human runs all through it—pure compassion for human suffering and a supreme regard for divine righteousness, care for the safety of man and care for the honor of God.

But if we would see the prayer in any fullness we must particularize and note the following thoughts :

1. *The prayer was God-begotten.*—It germinated from God's statement that He was on His way to hold a moral inquest over Sodom—"And the Lord said, Because the cry of

Sodom and Gomorrah is great and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which has come unto Me and if not I will know." In this address of the Lord, man's method of speaking is adopted in order to convey the ethical ideas of God. No uncertainty upon the part of God is intended. God's going to Sodom to search the city suggests to Abraham the probable number of righteous people whom the Lord may find there and hence the prayer of Abraham and its form. Hence also the many numbers in it.

2. *The prayer was short and definite.*—The patriarch had but one object—the salvation of Sodom and to that he claved. Nearly all of the successful prayers of the Bible are short and definite. The prayers of Bartimeus, of the publican, of the penitent thief, of the venturesome Peter walking the waves, illustrate this. If Peter had indulged in a long prayer, he would have been at the bottom of the sea before he reached the "Amen." A

long wordy prayer like a volume of ciphers stands for nothing.

3. *The prayer was tender and humble.*—The patriarch says to himself, "I must not let my familiarity run into presumption. I must have a due regard for the Lord's feelings as well as for the safety of Sodom." "Let not the Lord be angry," is the cry of his soft, sweet modesty as he prepares the way for his bolder petitions. His soul feels its way into the divine heart before his lips utter his request. To tenderness is added humility; the nearer he comes to God, the more clearly he recognizes his own nothingness. "Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." There must be something of this spirit of humility in every true prayer.

4. *The prayer was full of subtle skill and bold importunity.*—The skill is seen in the pitching of the hypothetical number so high as to insure a favorable response; the importunity is seen in the way the figures are gradually dropped as Grace enlarges until

Abraham's own soul says, "That number is the smallest possible consistent even with a human sense of justice." Tremblingly he plants each footstep in advance, and yet, love impelled, he cannot but proceed. He fears to offend and yet he fears still more to lose a chance of averting the awful doom. Earnestly, fearingly, on and on he goes, reducing the number, first by fives and then by tens, until at last he stops, overwhelmed with the impression that divine grace has triumphed over human importunity, and says, "The Judge of all the earth *will* do right; I cannot go a step farther, and I would not go a step farther if I could." This is a magnificent testimony of human reason to the justice of God. Honest and enlightened human reason and God the creator of reason are always in accord.

5. *The prayer was full of logic.*—The patriarch argues his prayer. A prayer that is not worth arguing is not worth offering. Every petition should have some valid reason back of it. That is what the prophet Hosea

teaches when he says, "Take words with you unto God," that is, use skilled logic in prayer. The Bible prayers are full of logic. Moses uses logic, he employs God's name as an argument. Upon the question, "What wilt Thou do with Thy great name?" he rings the changes. Nehemiah uses logic, employing the covenant relation of God's people as an argument. He rings the changes upon the phrases, "Thy servants," "Thy people." Here too, Abraham uses logic, taking the nature of God as an argument: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" That is, shall He not be true to His nature? In argument God allows the Bible heroes to go great lengths, and that for our instruction. Jesus lets the Syrophoenician woman go so far as actually to outreason Him. Such is the length to which the Bible heroes go that no man with any sense of reverence whatever need be afraid of surpassing them, or of being too bold in arguing and pleading with God in prayer. Men may condemn him, but God will not,

I remember reading an incident which is in point here. An English clergyman pleaded with God in public prayer to answer a petition which he had just offered, crying out in a wild burst of vehemence, "O Lord, do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory!" That was strong language, but the man was dead in earnest and meant it. Was his cry right? Would you use such an expression? He was severely criticised in England. The people who heard him were shocked. The daily papers piously censured him. Some called his expression blasphemy, and the very thought of it was stigmatized as a horror. Even brother clergymen joined in the censure and declared that they never had heard its equal. The assailed clergyman let the discussion go on for weeks without defense. But when the time came he replied, "I was only using logic in my prayer; my argument was only an appeal to God's nature. The public and the newspapers and my fellow clergymen do err in their censure of me, not knowing the Scriptures. My argument was not original;

it was borrowed; it was quoted word for word from one of the prayers of the Bible. The prayer which I quoted is in the fourteenth chapter of Jeremiah and reads thus: 'Do not abhor us, for Thy name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory; remember, break not Thy covenant with us.' Here in this one little verse of Scripture are three arguments which it is lawful to use in pressing home our prayers,—the name of God, the covenant of God, and the nature of God. God Himself instructs us in the logic of prayer and that because He wants us, like Abraham, to make a bold use of logic in our praying."

III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH THE PRAYER CARRIES IN IT.

I. *A man's life and a man's prayers correspond.*—A grand, bold life will produce grand, bold prayers; a limited life will produce limited prayers. As a rule religious life registers itself in prayer. Abraham was a massive man, a broad man, and so his prayer was massive

and broad. Between a man's life and his praying there is a constant action and reaction. Our prayers broaden or contract our lives and our lives broaden or contract our prayers. Abraham is an illustration of such broadening, while Lot illustrates the narrowing or contracting. Have you never noticed that Lot's prayer for these doomed cities is but a single, miserable, timorous, selfish petition? Out of five doomed cities he selects one and asks God to save for him and for his personal use the city of Zoar because it is a small city and he can easily flee to it. He has not one petition for the men of Sodom. Yet he had lived with them, feasted with them, made money out of them, and married his daughters to them. Now they are in the agonies of an appalling catastrophe, the very smoke of their torments sweeps across Lot's path but they have no place in his thoughts. Lot is absorbed with himself and his prayer is only a peevish, pitiful, selfish, childish cry. How the man withers in contrast with Abraham! But Lot did the best he could, for his prayer was

as big as he was. I tell you, if we are to be prayer-powers in the world, praying men out of wrath and destruction into the Kingdom of God, we must have broad sympathies, we must have the mind of God, we must be men of faith, rich in the Christian graces, and characterized by large and magnanimous deeds. To be a grand prayer-power in the world, we must have a magnificent Christian manhood to put into our prayers, for they can never be greater than we are. Abrahamic prayers necessitate Abrahamic men.

2. *The will of God should always have the largest place in prayer.*—"Prayer is not the ignorant outcry of a clamorous soul seeking to have its own way, but the calm, deliberate utterance of intelligent righteousness coming into entire sympathy with the mind of God." Harmony with the will of God—that is true prayer. "Thy will be done"—that is true prayer. The more we know of the will of God, the more we shall want it to be done. Harmony of man's will with God's will—do you say that narrows prayer? No, it does

not. It broadens the will of man. There is nothing narrow or narrowing about God. Is the Lord's Prayer narrow? Ages have failed to wear it out. All true prayer is built upon it as a foundation. Yet God has the largest place in it. The preface, the first, second, and third petitions are His. They set forth His personality, His name, His kingdom, His will; and they seek the glory of these. This preface we have to utter and these petitions we have to offer before we come to a single petition for ourselves. The fourth, fifth, and sixth all belong to us. Having offered them we come to the conclusion, and this belongs to God. The Lord's Prayer is the power that it is because God has the chief place in it. There cannot be anything broader or grander than the will of God. It is like God Himself, and He is the highest conception in the universe. There is therefore nothing so high for prayer as this—that it run parallel with God.

In this prayer of Abraham, God is given the chief place. The patriarch only wants God to do what is consistent with His justice.

Such is the respect paid to God's will that the prayer contains no really direct petition. Think of it—a great prayer and not a single direct petition in it. Abraham desires God to take His own way. Direct request might look like dictation and so his prayer is composed of questions. In this respect it is unlike all other prayers in the Bible. Each of the six questions inquires simply what is God's will. Thus God is put absolutely first. The self-limitations, the prudent progress in the interrogatories, the excuses for the different intercessions, and then the final silence, leaving everything with God, all, all bring out that characteristic of prayer upon which we are dwelling, namely, that God should be first and should have the largest place in our prayers.

3. *God is always in advance of the largest prayers of His people.*—Hence our highest encouragement in prayer, and in redemptive work, is in God. God was in advance of Abraham's prayer and yet Abraham taxed his faith and his sense of justice to the utter-

most. He made his prayer as large as he could. Abraham says to himself, It would be a grand thing if I could prevail upon God to spare Sodom for the sake of fifty righteous. With fear and trembling he goes to God and asks, "Wilt Thou not spare it for fifty?" And God answers at once, "Certainly." Fearing lest the fifty might not be found, he makes bold to go back to God and asks, "Peradventure five of the fifty be lacking; wilt Thou not spare it for forty-five?" And God answers at once, "Certainly." Fearing lest there might not be forty-five, he puts in a plea for forty. Fearing lest there might not be forty, he puts in a plea for thirty. Fearing lest there might not be thirty, he puts in a plea for twenty. Fearing lest there might not be even twenty, he puts in a plea for ten. For all the numbers which Abraham named with an increased trembling, God had His ready answer, "Certainly." And the last "Certainly" was precisely as ready and as emphatic as the first. It was not God that left off granting; it was Abraham that left off

asking. Abraham thought that he was leading God, but God was leading him. Thus it always is: God is always beyond man, even when a man prays his prayer under the white heat of faith. God is always beyond us. We have never yet prayed up to His promises.

Praying people of God, God is in advance of you. Workers in the Gospel field carrying upon your hearts the burden of souls, God is in advance of you. Parents praying for your children, wives praying for the salvation of your husbands, friends praying for the conversion of friends, God is in advance of you. Philanthropists and public spirited men and women lifting to God intercessionary hands on behalf of your church, your community, your nation, God is in advance of you. Holy saints yearning for the redemption of sinners, God is in advance of you. Men and women and children, making supplication for yourselves and seeking the realization of glowing ideals, asking for the reproduction in your own personality of the greatness of men of the past, God is in advance of you. Revivalist, dream-

ing of the repetition of Pentecost, God is in advance of you. God has more hope for humanity than you have. God has a deeper yearning for immortal souls, a more intense desire for a revival of religion, a larger heart, a larger mercy, and a larger pity for sinners than you have. God has a greater willingness to do for the redemption and the elevation of humanity, He has more interest in your nearest and dearest personal friend than you have. Oh the holy stimulus and strength which this fact carries in it!

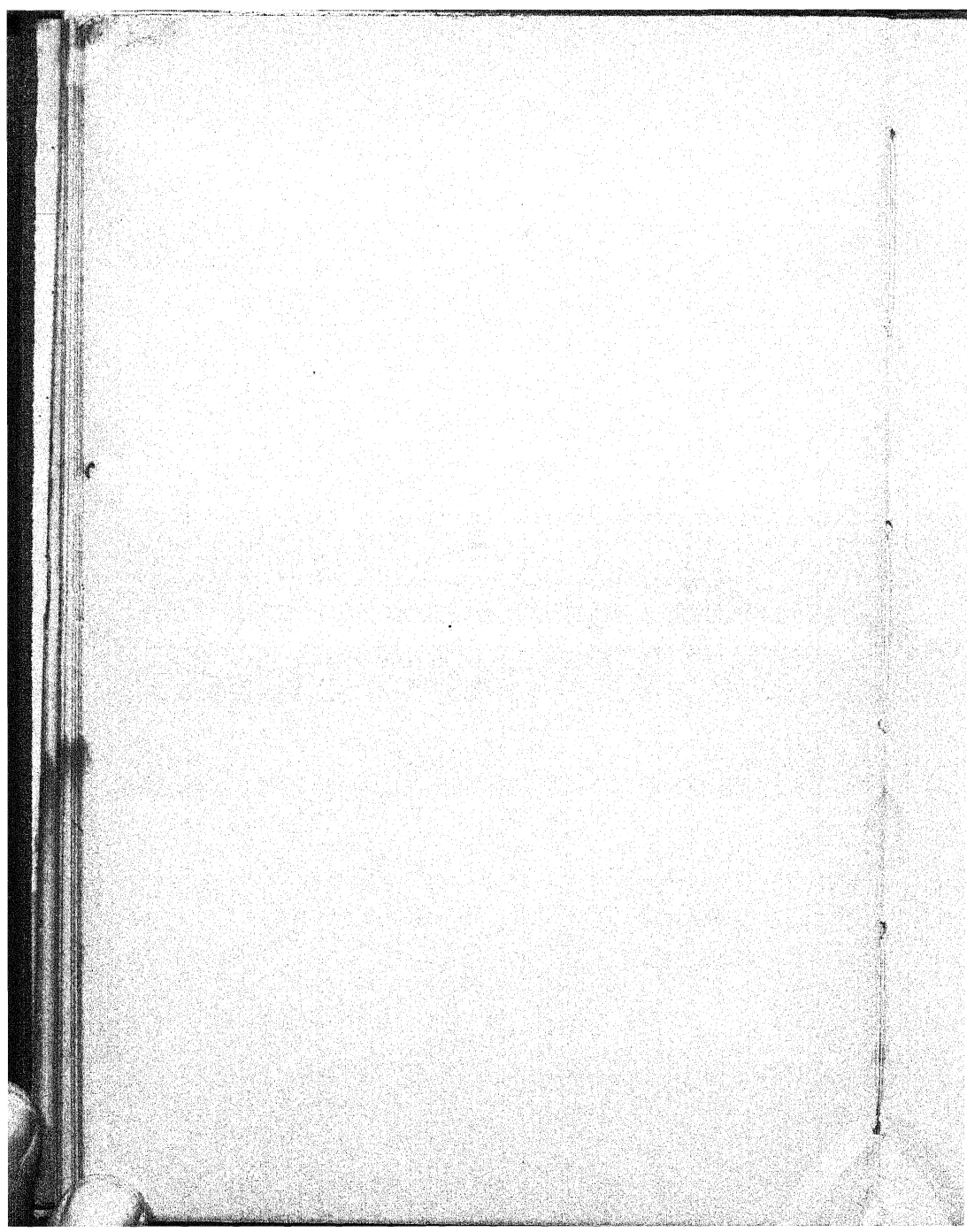
For since this is so, Omnipotence itself is wheeled into line with our highest and divinest purposes and with our Abrahamic cries and intercessions. Since this is so, we can safely broaden our prayers and add to our soaring aspirations, and increase a hundred-fold our efforts in all right directions. Since this is so the Church of God may launch great enterprises in the world and expect by and by the brilliant sun-burst of the millennial day. Church of God, sound this good cry all around the world—God is in advance of the

grandest hopes and the highest ideals and the largest and most enthusiastic prayers of the most daring of humanity. For this is what the world most of all needs to know.

II

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

*"And it came to pass in those days, that He
went into a mountain to pray, and continued all
night in prayer to God."—LUKE 6: 14.*



II

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE MASTER

THE fact that the Master prayed is our greatest argument for prayer. In dwelling upon this, the strongest argument for prayer, it must not be inferred that I abandon other arguments. I simply put the emphasis in the right place and so give prominence to an overlooked fact.

Nor do I mean it to be understood that I am trying to evade the objections made to prayer or that I am afraid to recognize these and meet them. For example, the operation of the laws and forces of nature is brought forward as an objection to prayer. It is one of the strongest of objections. I do not wish it to be understood that I am taking refuge in the prayers of Jesus because I feel that the laws and forces of nature controvert the doctrine of

prayer. On the contrary I believe that these forces and laws wait to be used by God for the very purpose of answering prayer and that this is their highest mission. When God made promises to man, the promises which we turn into prayers, He knew just what He could do with nature without unbalancing anything or violating any essential order of the universe. There is more give-and-take in the laws and forces of nature than we imagine. There are many natural ways of working results and, at the same time, conserving order. It is only a question of knowing how to do things. God knows nature through and through; it is man's ignorance that converts its laws and forces into an objection to prayer. You know what man has done by means of the powers of nature—what he through his new-found knowledge has done with light and water, with the atmosphere and with electricity. Yet one century ago the very things he now does would have been pronounced impossibilities and would have been called miracles. If a hundred years ago a man had

been asked to speak in New York so as to be heard in Chicago it would have been declared absurd. The laws of nature would have been quoted against it. The vibrations of a voice that could have been heard from New York to Chicago, would be so powerful that they would shake the city from the Battery to Harlem and topple the strongest structures into ruins. They would too; that is if a man adopted the method in the minds of the men of a century ago. But there are other methods. There are other ways of using the laws of nature. There are combinations of forces which work quietly and without destruction. Men do speak in New York and are heard in Chicago and nothing is unbalanced, the laws of nature are unviolated. There is no earthquake and both the Battery and Harlem are safe. This whole matter of what the laws of nature will and will not permit, what they will and will not do reduces itself into a question of knowledge. You can do anything with nature if you only know how. God knows how. Hence I argue that there is ample

room in nature for the answer of prayer. And hence I believe there is no legitimate argument anywhere in nature against the efficacy of prayer. In using Jesus Christ as an argument I am not trying to flee from objections to prayer of which I should be afraid, for there are none such. I deal with the prayers of the Master because He is the Master, and should be heard in this matter; and because the Throne of Grace was a mighty power in His life; and because His prayers are the strongest argument for prayer. It is always the best thing and the wisest thing for us to deal with and to rely upon the strongest.

Let me define here the scope which I mean to give to our thoughts. I propose to look at the prayers of Jesus as a working-force in His life; or rather, *the* working-force in His life—the power which made His life a success. I make this declaration of my limited purpose at this point to prevent the feeling of disappointment as we proceed. We shall not follow the usual line of thought, which is to

represent the prayers of Jesus as the sweet communion seasons in His life,—the times in which His human soul delighted itself in God and forgot the world. They were the luxuries of His life, the resting-places of His humanity, the hours devoted to confidential talks. In them Jesus refreshed Himself by converse with heaven. They were escapes from drudgery, toning up His weary nature. They helped Him to forget His contact with earth, and to lose sight of the grieving contradiction of sinners. The hatred of men hurt Him; the communion for a time with the Father's love cured the hurt. It is customary to emphasize the fact that prayer, with Jesus, was communing with God. Dwelling upon this aspect of His midnight hours on the mountain and in the garden, it is usual to emphasize the communion idea of prayer and to exhort men in this to follow Jesus. This magnificent line of thought is full of benefit. The power of communion with God should be exalted, for talking with Him elevates the mind as nothing else does. You cannot look Him in the face

without catching something of His brightness; you can always tell when Moses has been in the Mount; his face shines. You can always tell when the daughter of the King has been in the Ivory Palace; her robes are fragrant. The dew of the mountain is upon the locks of Him who has prayed all night in the sacred heights of Hermon. There is a godlikeness about the man who communes with God day by day. His life is a witness. There is a holy effluence, an outgoing of soul which sanctifies the very air. He carries with him and creates about him a spiritual atmosphere. As a communion with God, prayer is a magnificent privilege. It is Enoch walking with God and the walk ends with being with God forever. It means light, and it leads up to that life in which there is no darkness at all. It gives man a new status and clothes him with a new influence and makes him an abiding benediction. It results in a complete transformation and in a glorious transfiguration.

While all this is true and while this is a

grand line of thought to follow, still it is not the line which I have marked out. In the life of Jesus Christ prayer was more than a communion with God, it was the working-power of His life. It was the secret of His strength and the necessity of His being. Out of it His life had its outcome. It made His life. He prayed not simply as an example to us but because without prayer He could not live the great life which He came to live. No man ever lived a great life without prayer. Gladstone's life was great but Gladstone was a man of prayer. Cromwell's life was great but Cromwell was a man of prayer. John Bright's life was great, but John Bright was a man of prayer. So is it through the catalogue of the great. To be our example then, was not the original intention of the praying Jesus. Prayer was in His life as an original intention because it was a necessity, an inseparable and an essential part of His life. It was the element that gave His life power and crowned it with success. It brought Him great gifts which His human nature possessed,

such, for instance, as the baptism of the Holy Ghost with power, without which He never did anything great. Before the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him at His baptism, the life of Jesus was a comparative blank. It was only when the Holy Ghost, in answer to prayer, descended upon Him, that the long-bound attributes of His nature were unlocked, and that He began to speak His wonderful words and do His wonderful deeds. Prayer brought Him the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost made Him the man He was.

The most real things in the life of Jesus Christ were His prayers. His whole life centred in them. Prayer made Him. Take it out of His life and you unmake Him. Without it there would be no Jesus Christ. The chief figure in the story of His life is the kneeling Master. This is the reason that I have said that the fact that Jesus prayed is our greatest argument for prayer.

Do you consider Jesus Christ an argument for anything? Do you believe in His greatness? Do you admit that He was a success?

Do you admire His life? If so, prayer must be credited with what you admit, and believe and admire. There is no getting away from what He did by praying and what prayer did for and through Him. This is the vindication, the enforcement of prayer—the irrefutable argument. Jesus prayed and prayer made Him. If I am to be like Him I must pray. If I am to be a success, prayer must make me a success even as it so made Him. Jesus prayed. That is the whole argument on behalf of prayer, compressed into a single sentence of two words.

Man of God, if you are ever troubled about prayer, if the question harasses you—What profit is there in prayer?—go back to the fact that Jesus prayed. Use Him as an example, as an argument and as an inspiration. Believe in Him anew and thus believe in prayer anew. This is what John Knox did and you know what a mighty man of prayer he was. Queen Mary used to say that she feared the prayers of John Knox more than she did all the armies of her enemies. By prayer he girded himself

to fight the last foe, even death. He girded himself by association with the praying Master. On the day before his death he called to his wife and said, "Go, read me that Scripture where I first cast my anchor!" And so she read him the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel—that wonderful prayer of Jesus. As he listened to the calm but fervent pleadings of the Saviour of men a new life and a new spirit came into his soul. He forgot his weakness. He saw with a new vision how he who could no longer preach could nevertheless serve his fellow-men. He could serve them by prayer. He could become an intercessor. And so he gave his last hours up to prayer for the world lying in sin, for the great reformation, for the church, and for the future triumph of the gospel. By a new study of Jesus Christ at prayer God gave him a new faith in its power and efficacy, and like his Master he became an intercessor on behalf of his fellow-men. In this exercise he died. He lived preaching, he died praying.

But let me become more concrete. I have

been asserting that prayer was the working-power in the Master's career. Let me leave off asserting and begin verifying. Let me gather and place before you the facts of the case. There is only one way to do this and that is to open the Book and allow the story of Jesus to speak for itself. In it we find that Jesus began His career and closed it praying. We find Him praying all through His public career. Palestine was full of His haunts of prayer. Judas knew where His prayer-haunt near Jerusalem was, hence he knew where and when he could best betray Him into the hands of foes. The Jesus of the book was a man overwhelmed by labors. Multitudes from all parts of the land crowded around Him to be taught, to be blessed, and to be healed. The Pharisees were with Him and so were the doctors of the law, and they were all taking notes of His miraculous cures. Mothers brought their little children for Him to take them in His arms and pray for them. The Scribes and Sadducees pressed Him with their puzzling and entrapping questions.

Surely there was no prayer in such a life ! Why not ? He was too busy to have seasons of prayer. You are mistaken ; He was sometimes too busy to eat but never too busy to pray. The busier He was the more He prayed and the longer He made His seasons of prayer. It was when He was busiest that the record reads, " In the morning rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with Him followed Him and when they had found Him they said unto Him, Master all men seek Thee." If any busy man could live without prayer, Jesus could. But Jesus could not and He did not. If the hours in the heart of the day were packed with work, He rose up early and gave the first hours to prayer. He expended Himself in healing and so He went to God to get Himself renewed. The Scriptures show that He expended Himself. When the woman who needed healing, touched Him, it is said that Jesus perceived that virtue had gone out of Him. It is a disparaging mistake

to suppose that these cures which He wrought cost Him nothing. They were a great drain upon Him. He paid a price for every cure He wrought. So after exhausting His strength in the cures of the day He needed to go to God and get a renewal of power. This He did. This was the purpose of His hours of prayer. Thus we see prayer was a part of His very life and the source of His strength. "Too busy to pray!" You might as well say "Too busy to live." Prayer is not lost time. It is living itself. It is that without which no time is saved, but all time is lost. It conserves time making it valuable and effective. Jesus prayed before He worked and so got strength for His work; He prayed after He worked and thus made His labors effective and enduring. Like Him we should pray before we act and so get counsel and strength from God; and we should offer prayer after we act and get the blessing of God upon what we have done. Otherwise we shall labor in vain and shall fail. We should do this no matter how busy we are. We

should do it because we are busy. Remember this : to pray is to live ; not to pray is not to live, it is simply to exist. Prayer in a man's life means wisdom and power and efficacy and success. It means the life of Jesus Christ over again in character, in purpose, and in results. For the purpose of narrowing and making our thought more specific, I ask you to consider three things pertaining to the Master in which prayer played an important part.

1. *Jesus got Himself ready for His personal life and carried Himself through the crises of His personal life by means of prayer.*

—It was a crisis in His personal life when He entered upon His great ministry. But He did this with prayer. The ministry began at His baptism, when, as we are told, He prayed ; and as He prayed the Holy Ghost descended from Heaven in the form of a dove and rested upon Him. This prayer offered on the threshold of His public ministry brought Him the Holy Spirit with power. Now the Holy Spirit with power was His equipment for life.

He entered the Messianic ministry through the gateway of prayer.

It was a crisis in His personal life when He preached the Sermon on the Mount. Consider the part in the world which that sermon was destined to play. To build up that sermon was a mighty work. There is no greater effort in all literature. It is the authority in the realm of truth. To frame it and to deliver it and to start it on its eternal career was a giant task. Jesus felt this and so He prepared Himself for His task. How? By prayer. What work did He ever do apart from prayer? He looked to heaven when He furnished the miraculous meal; He looked up to heaven when He stood beside the grave of Lazarus which He was about to unlock. Both of these events were crises in His life and both were made successful by His prayers.

It was a crisis in His life when He was called to go forth and meet the scenes of Calvary. Yes, it was the crisis of crises. But how did Jesus prepare Himself for Calvary? Gethsemane is your answer. In Gethsemane

He prayed Himself into readiness. Gethsemane was Calvary before its time. It was Calvary in forecast. The prayer of Gethsemane was this question asked and answered: Shall there be a Calvary or shall there not be a Calvary? Here He really met Calvary and decreed it into existence with all its glorious results. Here was the real battle fought, and here, too, was the real victory won. Because the real victory was won here, therefore was it that Jesus met Pilate with such heroic calmness and was the least disturbed man in all the multitude that swept out of the gates of Jerusalem to the scenes of Golgotha.

That dying and triumphant shout of His, "It is finished," which He sent out from His cross to be heard all through the universe and all through time, was put into words and made a possible and actual thing, when with the blood-drops on His brow, He rose from the dust of Gethsemane and, resignedly looking the future in the face, said to His Father, "Thy will be done."

You see now what prayer was in the life of

Jesus Christ. It was the battle-field of His life where He won the victories of His life. He lived His life first in prayer, then afterwards in word and deed. He met the cross first in Gethsemane, then afterwards on Calvary. If there had been no Gethsemane there would have been no Calvary. The great lesson here for us is this: If we are to live well and effectively, heroically and victoriously, we must live our life first in prayer before we attempt to live it in word and deed. We must talk everything over with God first. We must pray over our cross before we try to bear it. We must meet our besetting sins at the Throne of Grace and then we shall overcome them when we meet them in the after-conflict. We are weak in life because we do not do this. We are deficient in our life because we are deficient in our prayers. Jesus Christ prayed His life through before He attempted to live it through. To pray well is to live well.

2. *Jesus got His disciples ready for their life and developed them in discipleship by*

means of prayer.—He prayed not only for Himself; He prayed also for His disciples. He tells us that He prayed for Peter, the leader of His apostolic band. Had Jesus not prayed for him there would have been no Peter. In the sifting of his faith to which Satan subjected him the man would have collapsed and fallen forever out of the ranks of Christianity. Then there would have been no leader on the day of Pentecost, and no one to open the door of the Christian church to the Gentile world.

But I have in my mind now, not so much the protection of His disciples by means of prayer as their development. Perhaps you have overlooked this point as an illustration of the place and value of prayer in the life of Jesus. But His story is full of illustrations of it.

You remember how Jesus led His disciples on in doctrine. How by degrees He taught them who He was, until He led them to the belief that He was the Son of God. The time came for him to call out from them this

fact, as a confession of their faith. That was a great step for them to take—openly to declare His divine Sonship. How does He do this? He prays them into it. Having prayed over it and for them He approaches the question. Beginning afar off He asks them one day, "Who do men say that I am?" When they have given various answers, then He asks, "But who say ye that I am?" Then it was that Peter speaking for the rest said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus told him that this was not a natural conclusion worked out by his own mind, it was a revelation from God. Why did Jesus say this? Because He had been praying for this very thing—that God would reveal His Sonship to His disciples. Scripture tells us that at this point of His life He had been praying and the results reveal just what He had been praying for. But this is not all. He wanted His chosen witnesses to have some unmistakable demonstration of His divine Sonship; so He took them with Him up on the slopes of Hermon

and prayed. As He prayed He was transfigured before them and they saw the flash of the glory of His Deity and heard the voice of the Father speaking from heaven and saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." His transfiguration was a result of prayer. He prayed it into existence and it bore witness to His Deity. Through prayer He brought His disciples into right views concerning Himself.

Take another illustration pertaining also to the education of the disciples. You know that it was for their instruction that Jesus gave them the form of prayer we commonly call the Lord's Prayer. That will always be considered a masterpiece. Jesus had to work to construct it. It is built up out of a dozen different parts of the Old Testament. It is a careful construction, showing work in both its plan and its fullness. It is not an extemporaneous thing. What it has been in the world reveals its value. All nations have prayed it. But do you know how that model prayer was constructed and where? It was

forged on the anvil of prayer. Jesus brought it with Him out from one of His long prayers. It was when He was praying that His disciples came and got it from Him. The Lord's prayer was the result of a previous prayer which was its glorious prelude. Prayer in the life of the Master was the workshop of the Master.

3. *Jesus established His cause on earth and provided for its future by means of prayer.—*

The ordination of the Twelve which founded the school of Apostles was certainly a part of the establishment of the Lord's cause; but this was done after a whole night spent in the mountain in prayer. That school was the greatest institution ever founded. It meant the establishment of His claims. It meant the future of Christianity. The influence of the Twelve will never cease. They still sit on the thrones of thought, and their words are still the judges of the nations. Even Judas is still a power on the side of Christ. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." This is testimony that shall ring for-

ever for the establishment of Christ's true character.

The reign of the Holy Ghost is certainly a power in insuring the progress and future of the cause of Christ on earth ; but this is an outcome of the prayers of Jesus. " I will pray the Father and He will give you the Comforter." Jesus Christ actually prayed Pentecost into existence.

If we would see the future of the cause of Christ in connection with His prayers we must open the New Testament and read that wonderful seventeenth chapter of the Fourth Gospel. This is the fullest record of any of the prayers of Jesus, and it helps us to interpret and fill out all the other prayers. It shows us how much the cause of Jesus was to Him and how He prayed over everything that pertained to it. He prayed over its prospects, its mysteries, its hindrances, its aims, its ages, the men of the cause and the people whom it should redeem. That prayer shows what a long prayer-list Jesus Christ had. This prayer has been an age-long blessing. Out

of what heart-material must it have been wrought! It is a mighty work. It is a gigantic effort. It is the product of untold cost. It is the sum total of the great life of the Master and it climaxes everything in that life. What manner of men and women shall we be when we realize all that is in this prayer! And how irresistible for the right and for the best interests of mankind shall the Church be when it becomes what Jesus asks the Father to make it. Suppose this prayer had never been made, what then? Can you conceive of the blank that would be? For nineteen hundred years God's people have been reaping the answer, and as yet the harvest has not half been gathered in.

I think that I have established and illustrated the point which I started out to make clear, viz., that prayer was the working-force in the life of the Master. Prayer was so in His life that if you eliminate it you absolutely undo and unmake Jesus. You take out the baptism of the Holy Ghost with power; you undo what He did for His disciples by way of

education and development in discipleship; you prevent the establishment of the school of the Apostles, that inner circle of His witnesses, the transmitters of His Gospel, and the authors of the New Testament with its words of eternal life; you make impossible His transfiguration; you keep the Sermon on the Mount from being preached; you take out of the world the Lord's Prayer; you expunge from the sacred page the seventeenth chapter of the Fourth Gospel; you prevent Gethsemane and you make Calvary an impossibility. Now annihilate these grand things, which were the results of the prayers of Jesus, and there is not much of Jesus left. Prayer made the Master what He was, and what you and I admire in Him.

What is the lesson of this fact which we have just established—that the highest personality that ever was built up was built up by prayer and that the grandest victories ever won in human life were won by prayer? You know what the lesson of this fact is: If we are ever to possess a fine and an influential

personality, if we are ever to win spiritual victories we must be people of much prayer. In all things we must take counsel of God and get into harmony with His will. We must often withdraw from the world and be alone with God. In prayer we must fight the battles and win the victories of life. Now it is just here that we find our failure and the secret of our weakness. A great English preacher once said, "If I wished to humble a man I should question him about his prayers." The preacher was right, he was discerning; for a man's prayers are his greatest defects.

Do you ask God to-day what is wrong with you, and why you are not what you ought to be, and why you are not doing what you ought to do? God sends you this as an answer,—You are wrong in the item of your prayers; they are infrequent, narrow, carnal, cold, and unmeaning. If there be one thing above another that God is doing by means of our study of this subject it is that He is calling us anew to prayer, He is bidding us make prayer the

working-power of our life, even as Jesus made it the working-power of His life. More prayer—this is our chief duty. More prayer—this is the crying need. When we get back to prayer as we ought we shall get back to power. When we get back to prayer as we ought and when we surround ourselves with it as with a constant atmosphere we shall be among our fellow-men as those who have been newly born, and newly ordained to service and newly equipped for the highest and grandest type of the Christlike life.

III

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF PAUL

"Behold he prayeth."—ACTS 9: 11.

III

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF PAUL

WHEN we stand face to face with Paul, we are in the presence of a strong character. Next to the Master he is perhaps the second power in the realm of Christendom. It is a great privilege to know him and to have even a book-fellowship with him. Communion with him is mental and spiritual tonic. He inspires and instructs and strengthens all who come within the circle of his friendship. He acts upon the Christian world like a second Christ. You know something of the character and personality of the man. He possessed a magnetic nature. He was strong and original. He was born an intellectual giant and was a man of immense mental stature. He was great by nature and would have demonstrated his

greatness whether a Christian or not. But when he let Christ possess his nature he became well-nigh irresistible. The spirit of Christ raised him to the highest pitch of his power. He was the thinker in the school of the Apostles. His mind was of majestic breadth and force and was also of a thorough and active type. This led him to look extensively and deeply into every subject which he undertook to investigate. When he dealt with a subject he had to know the causes involved and the consequences which were likely to follow, otherwise he could not be satisfied. For example, it was not enough for him to believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, he had to go further and inquire why it was necessary that He should die and how His death took sin away. He was also of an experimental turn of mind and practically tested everything with which he had to do. Hence he always wrote straight out of his own experience when he dealt with religion. It was a great thing for the Christian religion to have such an intellect, for if Christ could satisfy this

great man He could satisfy all great men. Christ did satisfy Paul and that forever and completely. This is a grand argument for Christ.

Paul came to Christianity when Christianity needed just such a leader. It needed a trained mind, a mind that could shape it into a form that would satisfy the intellectual world. He had such a mind—one trained in the rabbinical schools, able to state, define, and arrange ideas so as to make them strong and convincing. We have the issue of his scholarship in the thirteen Epistles which he left us and which contain the best explanation of Christianity possessed by the world. In these writings of his he takes the great facts of the story of Christ and evolves from them the grand doctrines which they carry in them and sets these forth in splendid outline. For instance there is the fact of history that Christ rose from the dead on the third day. He takes that and from it he evolves the grand doctrine of our future with its life and immortality, its endless glory. That fact carries

these grand things in it but it needs a Paul to see and evolve them. Christianity was a history. He took that history and philosophized its teachings, systematized them, and applied them to human life. He converted historical Christianity into a practical working force among men. He lived Christ before mankind and interpreted Christ for mankind. He gave the world applied Christianity, putting it into the personal life of man, into the home, into the state, into business and made it a regenerated and sanctifying force for God in all these spheres. He explained Christ to mankind and set forth His glorious attributes and His saving work. He emphasized His deity, His cross, and His eternal reign. By the fine way in which he understood Christ, in which he worshipped, lived, and preached Christ, he gave Him a new power, a new life in the world and he gave His religion a new start and a new history. Paul is the way to Christ just as Christ is the way to the Father. He gave the Gospel its universal cast and thus gave it its greater career. He planted it in the different

nations, he helped to break down the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile and to make the blessings of salvation the property of all men. He was a Jew to the Jew, a Greek to the Greek, a Roman to the Roman. There was no man of his size and spirit in the original Apostolic circle, but Christianity needed just such a one as he. He was the grandest spirit of the age and carried the future in him. Out of his writings have come the watchwords of all the reformations from his day to ours. When Luther awoke Europe from the slumber of centuries it was by the use of one of the great words of Paul. We owe him hundreds of powerful and quickening ideas which were never uttered before. Thus far in the history of the world only the Gospels have equalled his Epistles as divine writings and as a demonstration and a setting forth of Jesus Christ, who is the power of God unto salvation.

I propose now to deal with Paul as a problem and seek to get into his inner life and to find something of the secret of his power.

His prayerfulness was one of the fine points in his character and the chief secret and source of his greatness. Let us see if we can discover the man by means of a study of his prayers. "Behold he prayeth!" By prayer he fellowshiped with Jesus Christ and reached the deep things of God. By prayer he was piloted through the intricacies of life's perilous journey. Prayer was the genius of his marvellous Christian life. Prayer sustained him. His own words are the explanation of himself, "I bend the knee to the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The man who prays well is the man who lives well. The prayers of a man discover the man. As a man prays so is he.

The man's prayers discover the man—do you believe that? Is not that a principle that guides you in judging and interpreting your fellow-men? When you hear a man who fills his prayers with large ascriptions of praise do you not write him down as a man of reverence? When you hear a man ask large things of God do you not write him down as

a man of large faith? When you hear a man make a strong prayer, do you not write him down as a strong man? When you hear men pray you feel that you know them. You feel whether you can trust them or not. The men whom you know best are the men whom you have heard talk to God.

A striking story is told of Bishop Simpson. It illustrates in a humorous way how a man reveals himself by his prayers. The Bishop was travelling on horseback in the West. Saturday night overtook him, tired and dusty with his unfinished journey. He was compelled to put up over the Sabbath in a backwoods town. In this town there was a Methodist church. The Bishop of course went to the service. In approaching the church he met the pastor who greeted him as a stranger, and according to the custom of the place, plied him with all manner of questions as to his whereabouts, pedigree, and occupation. When he found out that the stranger professed to be a Methodist preacher the thought came to him that it would be nothing more

than brotherly to ask him to preach. But the question was, could the man preach ; would it not be a risk to impose him upon the people ? The resident pastor with these thoughts in his mind eyed him from head to foot and studied his appearance. He was travel-worn, and so his brother minister had grave suspicions as to his preaching ability. It occurred to him to test the stranger by means of prayer. He said to himself, " I'll just ask him to pray, and if he makes anything out of his prayer, I will let him try and preach." Taking one step at a time he made the prayer-proposition first. The Bishop accepted the invitation, led in prayer and in prayer revealed himself. He made a prayer the like of which had never been heard in that backwoods church. The people were amazed, electrified, lifted to the third heaven, until the house rang with involuntary responses of " Hallelujah," and " Amen." The pastor was convinced that the stranger could preach, and preach as his people had never heard a man preach. He said to himself, Did not this man say that his

name was Simpson? I do believe that it is our great Bishop Simpson. It must be—*it is*. Without asking the stranger to verify his suspicion he arose and said, "Brethren, we have with us none other than our great Bishop Simpson. I know him by his prayer and I am going to insist upon it that he shall preach." Bishop Simpson is known by his prayers, Paul is known by his prayers and thus it is with every man—his prayers reveal him.

It was not the intention of Paul to give the world an autobiography when he offered his prayers, but nevertheless he did. No writer in the Bible save David, interjected so many prayers into his writings as did Paul. This was not intentionally so, it was naturally so. Paul was himself when writing, and these prayer-interjections revealed the man. No sacred writer, except David, is so clearly reflected and revealed through his writings as Paul. No biographer of the multitudes of those who have written the story of Paul's life has given anything like the vivid portrayal of the man which he gives of himself. He gives his

prayers and they are autobiographical. They let us into the deepest recesses of the inner man. He had a wonderful freedom of access to the Holy of Holies. His prayer-spirit was the unstudied tone of all that he wrote, said and did. Almost every incident of his life recorded by himself was connected with prayer. It was the habit of his speech, it was the law of his personal make-up, and it gave a rich light to his personality. In his prayers we have his creed, his loves, hopes, visions, ambitions, consecrations, labors, friendships, his goal—the man himself. His whole life passed through prayer first and at the Throne of Grace received its mould and permanent shape. Prayer was the proof of his conversion and the first breath of his new life. From the time you find him, taken from the feet of Gamaliel, to the hour of his martyrdom in Rome by Nero, you can point to him as a man of profound devotion and say, "Behold he prayeth." His whole Christian life was one grand prayer. Such was his constant attitude Godward, that it could be

truthfully said of him he "prayed without ceasing."

I have made, as you see, some very broad and emphatic statements with regard to Paul as a man of prayer. I propose now to verify them. Here is the record, here are his writings, if these things which I have spoken be not so their falsity can be proved. For the sake of verifying what I have asserted and also as a means of getting our subject more fully before us I ask you to join me, first, in tracking his career as a preacher through the Book of the Acts, and second I ask you to join me in turning the pages of his Epistles and note how full of his prayers they are. In following the first line of thought we find:

1. *Paul prayed when entering upon and passing through all the great events of his life.*—His career was shaped in the school of prayer and in this school he was prepared for and helped in his life-work. I cannot recall a single exception of any note when he did not pray. He prayed the day of his con-

version, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" He prayed on the day of his baptism; Ananias who baptized him found him praying. He prayed when he was cast into prison. He was in the temple praying when God came and gave him his great commission as the Apostle to the Gentiles. This commission determined his life-work. He was in prayer when the vision came to him from Macedonia and called him to take the Gospel to the world. Thrice he prayed over his "thorn in the flesh." It was his great affliction. When he bade the elders of the Ephesian church farewell he knelt down upon the seashore and prayed. He prayed during the terrors of the shipwreck and received from God the assurance that not a soul should be lost, and not a soul was lost. These are historical facts. Each one of them is the verification of the words, "Behold he prayeth." In the spirit of entire dependence upon God he took every step of his career. Prayer was the constant mood of his life. He was singularly free from all distressing anxiety.

He never lacked guidance and he never failed to know just what he ought to do. He never lost his peace. Yet you know how full of ups and downs his life was. You know its hardships, its wearing labors, the extremes which were in it. Listen to him as he sums up his own life. Speaking of himself in comparison with certain other laborers for Christ he says, "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness."

Paul, how was it that you passed through

these experiences and never lost your peace and never failed of the victory? His answer is that it was prayerfulness that carried him through; the secret of his life was prayer, sharing his life in everything with God. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus."

2. *Paul prayed when he composed his great writings.*—His Epistles were forged on the anvil of prayer. The elements of prayer reign here. He wrote and taught in the spirit of prayer. His Epistles are all inlaid with prayers. He opens each with a salutation which is a prayer for the peace of God; and he closes every one of them with an autograph benediction which calls down the blessing of Divine grace. The body of his letters is full of prayer-praises and ejaculatory formulas and devotional single sentences. Prayer stamps its solemn grandeur upon every page.

Before elaborating the point which is immediately before us, I wish to stop for a moment and utter a word about Paul as a teacher upon the subject of prayer. A word in regard to this I trust will lead us the more readily to accept his teachings and give them their due weight. No other Apostle teaches us on this line with anything like his fullness.

Remember things have changed. The Church has moved into a new dispensation. Jesus Christ has come on the stage of time and has offered His sacrifice for sin and has ascended to the Throne on high to sway the universal sceptre. Prayer has got to be adjusted to Him and to His work and to His exalted state. We need new instruction on prayer. We need a leader here. Who shall instruct us, who shall lead us? Paul; for this is one of his Apostolic functions. This he does—he adjusts prayer to the new condition of things. He gives us the new method of devotion which pertains to the new dispensation. He gives us the only formulas of perfect Christian prayer in the New Testa-

ment. If this be so then we cannot either pray aright or to the best effect unless we master and follow his teaching.

Now, briefly, what is the summary of Paul's teaching with regard to prayer under the new dispensation? It is this: We have access to God through the mediation of His incarnate Son by the suggestion and spiritual ministry of the Holy Spirit. This was the criterion according to which Paul himself framed and offered his prayers. His own words are, "In Him [*i. e.*, in Christ] we have access with confidence." "Through Him [*i. e.*, through Christ] we, both Jew and Gentile, have access by the Spirit unto the Father." He teaches that prayer is to be offered to-day unto God by the Spirit through Jesus Christ.

He gives us also the new name of God which we are to use under this new dispensation. This name is, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the name of God which Paul used in his great prayers and upon which he based his grandest petitions.

He used it to sustain his own faith, and he used it as an argument to enforce his petitions with God Himself. The name of God has always been an argument with God when men have rightly based their petitions upon it. God has a reputation to sustain. His name voices His reputation. This is the reason that His name is an argument. Moses threw himself upon the name of God when he pled for Israel during one of the crises of the nation,—“Grant this, O God, for if Thou wilt not, what will become of Thy great name among the children of men?” That was the way Moses used the covenant name of God in prayer. “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—this name under the New Testament corresponds to the covenant name of God under the Old Testament. Just what does this name mean? What thought does it carry? Paul himself explains this. Its meaning and its conception of God is, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.” When we address

God in prayer as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ we address One whose past infinite gift to us insures all future and needed gifts. We can ask of Him nothing beyond what in His infinite love He has already given. Certainly this new covenant name of God which Paul teaches us to use calls for holy boldness in prayer.

But let us come back to the point from which we departed, namely the relation of Paul's prayers to his great writings. His Epistles were the product of prayer and are filled with prayer. In writing, he constantly appeals to his invisible Master, for He was always present with him. He spread his parchment, as it were, before the Lord and receiving his inspiration in prayer, he transmitted his Master's revealed will.

I wish you to notice that Paul was a great theologian and he often uses his prayers as the vehicle of his theology. The whole Pauline theology might be constructed out of his prayers. It is here in his devotional sentences. He condenses the essence of the

theological subject which he treats, into a fervid thanksgiving or into a well phrased petition. Doctrinal statements of great importance are in the form of prayer. I tell you that that is good theology that can be made available in prayer and that can be brought before God Himself. Paul's very doctrines worship God, and that is as it ought to be. A doctrine that is not worshipful is not Christian. Paul's choicest and most classical passages are fragments of his prayers and are finished acts of worship. Besides this, his prayers show work, labor, thought, and brain, as well as spiritual power. His prayers cost. Nothing of his reveals more clearly the massiveness of his mind. Take for example the Apostolic Benediction. We owe this to Paul. And there is no short prayer in all literature that surpasses it for beauty and for power. It is the favorite of centuries. It is the great doctrine of the Trinity made practical and usable. It is theology turned into life. Take for example the prayer which he made for the Ephesians and which is the gem of that won-

derful Epistle to them. He put the best that was in him into that prayer. It is the Holy of Holies in that writing of his which has been called, "The Temple Epistle" of his pen. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." That is a masterpiece. That is devotional language at its best. That is petition beyond which there is

nothing further. For doctrine, for petition, for devotion, for doxology, all blended into one beautiful whole—that is an unsurpassable climax. It was in Paul's life what the Intercessory Prayer of the Fourth Gospel was in the life of the Master. Paul found rest in it just as Jesus found rest in the final prayer which He offered before He went to His sorrow and to His cross.

In bringing this study to a close are there not some practical lessons which we should learn as believers in the same God in whom Paul believed and as disciples of the same Master, and as members and co-workers of the same Christian Church? There certainly are. We should strive to exercise a new faith in prayer and to put a new value upon it. What more can we ask than just what prayer has done for such men as Paul? You cannot separate prayer and the man.

In this matter Paul rebukes us, Paul teaches us, Paul stimulates us. He believed in prayer, so should we. He put his best efforts into prayer, so should we. But we do not. Our

prayers as a rule cost us little. This is the reason we are so feeble in prayer and why prayer is such a small power in our lives. One lesson of to-day is this: We must take more pains with our prayers, spend more time on them, put more of ourselves into them, and make them greater powers to ourselves and to others. Paul's prayers are powers. They help us, they teach us how large and boundless prayer may be by right. Do our prayers teach others that? Paul's prayers furnish us with materials for petitions, create within us healthy desires and act as a spiritual tonic. Do our prayers do that? Paul's are mighty exhortations and awaken us to a new sense of our duties. They are filled with magnificent strains of adoration which make us worshipful. They set forth the grand conception of the perfect individual Christian life and set us to measure ourselves by this conception. Do our prayers act thus? Paul's prayers are a wholesome theology and reveal the way of salvation and teach that Christ is Christianity and that the Cross is the centre

of the true religion, and that being a Christian consists in living in vital union with Jesus Christ and being like Him. Are such the characteristics of our prayers?

We need to improve our prayers and to this end we should live more with Paul and make his life ours. His prayers grew out of his life and his life was in turn influenced by them. We need to live his life, reach his relations with Christ, fill ourselves with his Apostolic doctrines, and get his Epistles into our understanding, our imagination, and our hearts. When we do this, then we shall be able to pray his prayers as he prayed them. Then our prayers will be a true theology to others, a true vision of duty, and a clear presentation of Christian character and Christian privilege.

One thing more. How broad and how influential prayer made the life of Paul! It made him a saving intercessor among men and put him into sympathetic touch with the whole world. Paul's prayers were largely intercessory, and that should be the type of ours.

When one stands in the operating room of the Western Union Telegraph Company he is at a centre from which he can communicate with all the extremities of the world. In a similar manner but by a subtler agency than electricity the Apostle's prayer-room was the headquarters from which unseen influence went by way of the Mercy Seat to his friend and to the cause of Christ in Palestine, Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, and everywhere. Because he used this world-connecting prayer-room of his he became a universal father. Oh what narrow lives we live because we are not like Paul! How many people and causes have asked us to pray for them and we have not! Our prayers like ourselves are narrow. Pray more; make your prayers intercessory. Take more people into them, take more causes into them, take more churches into them, take all Christendom into them. Make them broader and thus make your lives broader.

The following words were found among the private papers of a great and busy man, Sir

Thomas Browne, the noted British physician. I give them to you for they show what each one of you can do in this matter of intercessory prayer. He writes, "I have resolved to pray more and to pray always, to pray in all places where quietness inviteth, in the house, on the highway and on the street; and to know no street or passage in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten God." Do the streets of your city bear witness that you pray? Have you not walked many a street without ever thinking of offering a prayer? He continues: "I purpose to take occasion of praying upon the sight of any church which I may pass, that God may be worshipped there in the spirit, and that souls may be saved there; to pray daily for my sick patients and for the patients of other physicians; at my entrance into any home to say, 'May the peace of God abide here'; after hearing a sermon, to pray for a blessing upon God's truth, and upon the messenger; upon the sight of a beautiful person to bless God for His creatures, to pray for the beauty

of such an one's soul, that God may enrich her with inward graces, that the outward and the inward may correspond; upon the sight of deformed persons to pray God to give them wholeness of soul, and by and by to give them the beauty of the resurrection."

That is the type of a Pauline man for you, and that is the type of the busy Christian that Christ would have each of us to be,—men and women praying both for themselves and for others.

"Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me day and night.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those they call their friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

IV

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."—COL. 4: 12.

IV

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

EPAPHRAS is my subject in a practical and concrete form. In him prayer was a working-force in the church. He was a member of the church of Colosse. He was absent from his home-church, being with Paul in Rome. Yet Paul in writing his Epistle to the Colossians tells the brethren that Epaphras was hard at work for the church of Colosse and by the medium of prayer was helping to build that church up into a complete harmony with the will of God. Although living for the time being in the city of Rome he was a spiritual power in the life of the distant church of Colosse. He took hold of God for that church and on its behalf moved the arm that moved the world.

He was practiced in the power of prayer and as a prayer-power he was a church-power. Hear what Paul says of him ; " Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Epaphras, we honor thee, yet some of us have just found out the fact of thy existence. In our prior reading of the epistle to the Colossians, we so glided over the part which carries thy name, that we missed it altogether ; or else we read the name as though it was that of a mere nobody. But here thou art calling us to duty, actually opening up a new page of life for us and revealing to us undreamed possibilities, and showing us an unused power which is next to omnipotence, and setting us an example in a service that means successful strength for the church of Christ, a richness and a maturity of experience for the Christian. We rejoice in this new characteristic of prayer which thou hast established, viz. : *Prayer is a working-power*

in the church and a medium of Christian service.

I speak as though our subject were a new thought. Is it absolutely so? No, not absolutely. It is largely a new thought with us because it has been an overlooked thought.

It was not a new or an overlooked thought with the poet-singer of the Hebrews. In that grandest song of the soul, the messianic psalm of the Psalter, the seventy-second, in setting forth the glory of the coming Christ in type and in truth and in speaking of the means by which His Kingdom should be enlarged into universality he predicts that prayer shall be one of the working-powers in the development of the messianic sovereignty. These are his words: "Prayer also shall be made for Him continually and daily shall He be praised." We are to pray for Christ and we are so to pray for Him as to make our prayers a power in His grand enthronement over the earth. It is when the inspired poet makes this assertion, "Prayer shall be made for Him continually," that he breaks forth into that

sublime doxology with which the messianic psalm closes :

“ His name shall endure forever :

His name shall be continued as long as the sun ;

And men shall be blessed in Him :

All nations shall call Him blessed.

“ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,

Who only doeth wondrous things :

And blessed be His glorious name forever ;

And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.

Amen, and Amen.”

The thought was not a new one to Luke, the Beloved Physician who wrote the third Gospel. In giving us the picture of the aged Simeon and Anna, who were in the temple waiting for the consolation of Israel—the coming of the Christ—he says of Anna that while she departed not from the Temple she was not idle there ; “ She served God there day and night by her prayers.” The fact of service by means of prayer could not be put into plainer language than it is put by these words of Luke the Beloved Physician.

Epaphras is sustained by other witnesses. This being so it is a disgrace which amounts

almost to a crime for Christian people to overlook the great fact that prayer may be made a medium of service and a working-power in the life of the church and in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The fact needs to be emphasized. This prayer-power is neglected because it is not sufficiently magnified and set into its deserved prominence. It is neglected even where you would least expect to find neglect and non-use. It is neglected even by those ordained to the ministry of the Gospel. Let me give you an illustration.

In the summer of 1898, two of the members of the New York Presbytery attended the Northfield conferences for the deepening of spiritual life. They came back to their work all on fire with a new enthusiasm. As a natural consequence they set in motion plans for the awakening of the whole presbytery. In waiting upon God for a renewal of the Spirit the members of the presbytery one and all, gave themselves to deep searching of heart and life. It occurred to the one appointed to

lead the devotions, to question his brethren relative to the prayer-life of each. He said, "Brethren, we want to make confession to God and to one another this day. It will do us good. Let all those who spend thirty minutes each day in prayer to God, associating Him with their work, raise their hands." Only one hand went up. Then he dropped to fifteen minutes. But not half of the hands were raised. Prayer a working-power in the church and yet over half of those appointed to direct the work of the church consigning it to comparative non-use! That is the state of the case. When he dropped to five minutes all hands went up, but one man afterwards chided himself for lifting his hand even then, saying, "I am not sure that I did not practice some deceit in putting up my hand even at five minutes. It has been an awful revelation to me how little time I spend alone with God."

That is the pulpit in this item of prayer. Can the pew make a better showing? Put the searching question to yourselves. Be

as square and as open in your confession as the members of the New York presbytery were in this matter. How much time do you spend in prayer every day? Luther, when he was most pressed by the burdens of his great and effective life said, "I am so busy now that I have to spend two and three hours each day with God in prayer or I never could get through each day's work." With him, to pray was to work. It was getting the help of God to despatch his labor. It was the working-power that built up the great reformation. Luther understood our subject and he knew how to reduce it to practice. So did Dwight L. Moody. In speaking of the value of prayer he once said to a vast audience, "I would rather be able to pray like Daniel than to preach like the archangel Gabriel. We are depending too much on sermons and they are proving that they are undependable. If I were choosing ten men to work with me for the redemption of a city, I should choose ten men who could pray well in preference to any ten men who could

preach well. It was prayer that was the power in the Apostolic days. We must get back to Apostolic days. It was prayer that made the fisherman's sermon a power on the Day of Pentecost. It converted three thousand souls, because the whole power of that praying audience of disciples who were present was breathed into the sermon as Peter spoke. That day one sermon converted three thousand souls; to-day it takes three thousand sermons to convert one soul." Mr. Moody is right. But why this difference? The difference is found in the use and non-use of prayer as a working-force in pushing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In that era of the Christian dispensation, the era recorded in the Book of the Acts there was a perfect passion for prayer. The men and women of that Book are men and women on their knees before God, laying hold of God and using God, being girded by God and being guided by God, being God-filled and God-strong. What have we in this Book? You know. We have the one hundred and twenty in the

upper room praying, and the result, Pentecost. We have Peter praying on the house-top and Cornelius praying in the palace and the result, the grand incoming of the Gentile world to the Christian church. That was nothing short of a miraculous revolution in the religious world. We have Philip and the Samaritans praying and the result, a second Pentecost down in Samaria. We have Paul praying and as a result a new Apostle of Jesus Christ, the greatest Apostle of all, the chief of Apostles. We have the women praying at the riverside prayer-meeting and as a result the conversion of Lydia and the Gospel started in its career in Europe westward, to circle the world. Take prayer out of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles and there will be no Book of the Acts of the Apostles. The great things of that Book will fall out of existence.

We want back again in the Christian church the passion of prayer which in the first days established that church and made it the power which it was when it had such men

as Peter and John and Paul all of them giants at the Throne of Grace. Be assured of this :— for Apostolic times we must have Apostolic men, and Apostolic truths, and Apostolic methods, and Apostolic instrumentalities, and the Apostolic presence and cooperation of God. By prayer these can be secured ; but without prayer these cannot be secured.

When I speak of prayer as a working-force in the church I mean that it is a power with God. It brings God into communication with us. It makes Him and us co-workers. It brings into the church a power not our own that makes for righteousness. How it does this I cannot explain. This is the standing miracle of the ages. But the miracle exists and by prayer man through his faith commands the supernatural. That is a fact. Now a fact does not need to be proved, it needs only to be looked at, taken in, believed and used. All we can say is, God has ordained it so and it is so. We see it to be so. Prayers are offered and answers are given. Things are in our lives in answer to prayer

that would not be in our lives if we neglected to pray. God by a direct act of His own puts them there. Praying Christians are stronger and much more effective than non-praying Christians. Nothing so marks the decline, or the apostasy, of a decaying church as assigning to prayer a secondary place. These things need no proof, they are facts before our eyes. What is the use of fooling with facts? The only thing to do is to admit them and make them serve us and bless us. Now the greatest fact about prayer is that it is a working force in religion. If this be so then it is our duty to believe it and to use it.

My fellow-men, do you believe that prayer is a working force in the church? And do you believe it in the highest, broadest and most unrestricted sense? Let us see. I put this question once to a Christian man: Do you believe in prayer—that is do you believe that there is any outcome of prayer, any gain from prayer? He replied, "I certainly do. I believe that prayer is efficacious." How is it efficacious? "I believe that it is effica-

cious because it has a reflex influence. It is efficacious for self-kindling. It helps to self-acquaintance. Of course I do not believe that it has any influence on God. I look at it altogether apart from God. God has His fixed methods of doing things and nothing can come in here. I leave God to take care of Himself. He knows what it is best to do, and I do not presume to dictate to Him. I look at prayer altogether apart from God. It is a psychological good to me so I believe in prayer. It has a manward power. It is a part of my culture. It has a culture-value. Let me set forth my idea by the use of an ancient parable: A certain father was on his death-bed. He called his sons to him and said, 'My dear children, I have a treasure of great value hidden away in my fields. When I am gone dig for it and you will be sure to find it.' After the funeral the sons set to work to dig. With great diligence and perseverance they dug the whole farm over. They found neither gold nor jewels nor anything else they had expected; but as they dug they found an ap-

petite and strength and health and habits of industry. Moreover, the land which was thoroughly broken up to the sun and air gave magnificent crops. Then they understood what treasure their wise father meant. Such is my idea of prayer. It is a good to myself. Its results are found in me. It calls me to think good thoughts, to form good resolutions, to spread myself and my life out before God, to give myself up to self-examination. In this way it purifies, inspires, and makes me a better and more efficient man; consequently it makes me a power for good in the church and in the community. It is as you claim a working-force in the church. It works through me, that is my idea of prayer."

That man's view of prayer is very limited and does not at all cover the whole ground. It is fractional and fragmentary. There is truth in it. Prayer does all that he says, but it does much more. He looks at prayer simply as it works manward, but prayer works Godward, and this fact he leaves completely out of sight. There is truth in what he says

—prayer has great reflex effect and benefit. Much comes to us in that form. A calm comes to us and a power also because we have been thinking rightly. But let us never give way to the idea that this is the whole account of the matter. No; prayer is an influence with God. It works outside of ourselves and for this we have God's guarantee in His own Word as well as actual cases of the human experience. By prayer men take certain causes and crises to God, leave them with Him, and He takes them up, works them out, and relieves His people of all responsibility and anxiety.

Here is a case: "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain on the earth for the space of three years and six months and it rained not. And he prayed again and this time for rain and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit." That is broader than the answer of prayer by reflex action of prayer on the man who prays. That is prayer as a working force in the church, for

it brought the covenant people of God back from the service of Baal to the service of Jehovah, and inaugurated one of the most blessed reformations in the history of Israel.

A similar case is that of Hezekiah when he received a blasphemous letter from the king of Assyria calling upon him to surrender Jerusalem and his kingdom. It was a mighty army that hemmed in the Holy City that day, when the case of Israel was, humanly speaking, utterly without hope. If deliverance come not from God the die is cast. Hezekiah, recognizing this, takes the letter, opens it and spreads it before God in the Temple, asking Him to intervene. What comes of Hezekiah's prayer? Does it work? This is the record: "And it came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, one hundred, fourscore and five thousand, and when they arose early in the morning behold they were all dead men." The prayer of Hezekiah set God at work for Israel. If he had not prayed there would have been no deliverance. Do not say

that this is an ancient event and is no rule for to-day. It is deceiving to say that, for the God to whom we pray is the same God and prayer to Him is as much a power as it ever was. The purpose of this chapter is to help us to feel this.

Modern events tally with ancient events in this matter of prayer. It was my privilege, when pastor of Park Street Church, Boston, to preside at the fiftieth anniversary of the great American missionary to Turkey, Dr. Cyrus Hamlin. On that occasion he told us of an answer to prayer something like that which God gave to Hezekiah. In the year 1851 when Mahmud was Sultan of Turkey, he ordered the expulsion of all missionaries from the empire. The edict was final and irreversible. Dr. Hamlin, heart-broken and discouraged said to William Goodell, "Goodell, our life-work is a failure at the very start, for both the British and American consuls say the edict of expulsion must prevail and we must go at once." Goodell replied, "Hamlin, the Sultan of Heaven can change this; let us ap-

peal to Him in prayer." So they gave themselves to prayer, they opened the edict and spread it before God, they prayed all night, for it seemed to them in their helplessness that their very destiny hung in the balance. Well, what of it? This: the next day Mahmud died and the edict of expulsion was never mentioned again. Dr. Hamlin lived in Constantinople for half a century and more, and was instrumental in founding the famous Robert College there which exists under American rule and is to-day the light of the Turkish Empire.

This is our method in setting forth the fact of prayer. We lay emphasis on God. We teach that prayer is a working-power in the church because prayer influences God to act in His almightiness on behalf of the church and for the salvation of mankind. The history of the church is full of narratives of prayers that have gone straight to heaven and have come back with the very things prayed for. The likeness of what has been received to what has been asked for, has

been such as to preclude all doctrine of chance or the unguided operation of mere natural law. The fulfillments have been careful portraits of the prayers. Do portraits happen? These answers cannot be explained except on the theory of a prayer-hearing God. Because of these answers I affirm, and I have God's Book back of me, that nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside of the will of God. But the scope of the will of God is vast, very vast; it is like the scope of His almightiness.

I have said enough on this line. Let me give our thoughts a practical turn. Let me address myself to a pointed question which I can take for granted is uppermost in every earnest mind. It is this: How can we use prayer and make it a working force in the life of the church? I answer there are four ways in which you can so use it and these ways are suggested by the Book of the Acts.

1. *You can make prayer a working-power in the conversion of souls.*—In the praying days of the Apostles it is recorded that souls

were daily added unto the church. They were prayed into union with the Lord and His people. Has this experience been duplicated in our day? Have men in our century been prayed into conversion? Yea, by the hundreds. How was Dr. Hudson Taylor converted? He himself tells us that it was by the prayers of his mother. Not a word had been spoken to him, but his mother set apart a season to be spent in prayer for the conversion of her boy. At the end of that season she stopped praying and sang a song of praise for the answer of her prayer. She did not even go out to inquire if Hudson had given his heart to Christ. She waited for him to come and tell her, and he did, and was astonished to find that she knew it. That mother did a magnificent work for God and the church the day she prayed her son into the Christian faith. Mothers, if you had her faith and her spirit of supplication you could do a similar work in your home.

George Müller in one of his addresses tells us that in 1844 five individuals were laid upon

his heart and he began to pray for them. They did not know that he was praying for them. It was eighteen months before the first one was converted, and forty years before the last one was converted. All five were brought into the Kingdom of God by George Müller's prayers. Christians, are you doing any work of that kind? Why not? There are souls in your homes and souls all around you unsaved because you are prayerless.

There are people to whom you have no access by means of personal association. They are so hedged in by social laws that you cannot reach them to talk with them. They are deaf to you. They may live in your own block but the barriers between you and them seem unscalable. Yet you are not altogether shut off from working for them. You have the prayer-method left. Try to reach them that way. This story is told in London: In one of the tall buildings there, at the top, was a newspaper office which received its news from Scotland by private wire. There were two young men in charge of the

telegraph office. One went about London to collect local news. On his return one night he found the door locked and he could not make the man on the top floor hear him. What did he do? Going to the nearest telegraph office he telegraphed to Edinburgh, "Wake up that man in the fifth story, I am locked out." By the way of Edinburgh he reached his man and the man came down and opened the door. That was the quickest and most effective way to get at the man in the fifth story. There is a way whereby you can get at your fellow-men and that way is by the Throne of Grace. Now if men are being reached and saved that way it is a shame for the people in our Christian churches not to take that way to reach and save men.

2. *You can use prayer as a working-force in opening new doors into wider fields for the spread of the Gospel.*—Paul used prayer in this way. He prayed and he requested the Roman Christians to pray with him that he might be allowed to visit Rome. His prayer is recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the

Epistle to the Romans and the answer is recorded in the Book of the Acts from the twentieth chapter to the close of the Book. It is marvellous how close the answer is to the prayer. Yes, in answer to prayer Paul went to Rome. He was prayed there. Now you know what Rome was. It was not merely a place of interest, a place for the fulfillment of personal desire, but it was a great vantage ground where God through Paul could make a fine entrance into Roman history. It was from Paul at Rome that the great Epistles came—those to the Ephesians, the Philippians and the Colossians. These are great store-houses. They are disciple-builders. They are church-builders. They are open doors through which Jesus Christ marches triumphantly out and into and down the centuries.

Hudson Taylor says that his father prayed the Chinese inland mission into existence. Before Hudson's birth having heard from a sea captain, Basil Hall, of the spiritual destitution of China, he took the need of China as a burden upon his heart. As he could not go

himself he prayed the Lord of the harvest to send laborers there. His own son was sent but he did not know of his father's prayers. It was seven years after he had been working in China as a missionary that he came across his father's diary and found that he had been sent in answer to prayers offered before he was born. It was a great door that the father of Hudson Taylor prayed open when he prayed open the door into China inland.

3. *You can use prayer as a working-force to call forth the means needed to carry on the Lord's work.*—The story of the work of George Müller is all that is requisite to illustrate and establish this point. Mr. Müller's is an extreme case and carries all other cases in it. His was a work in which faith was taxed to the uttermost and in which prayer was also, but neither of them failed. It was altogether a dealing with God. There was no appeal to man whatever. There was no tax levied and no collection urged. The sum total which this man of God received and disbursed was no less than seven million dollars.

Ere he died he stood before the world and challenged any one to show a single instance in which he had solicited aid from man. His solicitation was wholly done at the Throne of Grace. He had two thousand orphans under his roof but he felt no anxiety. He left that for God to feel. Sometimes he had no next meal in sight, but in fifty-five long years the next meal never failed to appear. It was always there. Is not such a life a tonic to faith? When the church needs money it should go to God to whom belongs the silver and the gold, and ask Him. The right kind of prayer can fill the treasuries of the church at home and abroad—George Müller being a witness.

4. *You can use prayer as a working-force in inaugurating new Pentecosts in the life of the church.*—In the days of the Apostles there were no less than four Pentecosts and they were all results of prayer. God will always see to it that there shall be a succession of Pentecosts if the church will only do its work in His way. The outpouring in Jerusalem was followed by another in Samaria under

Philip, and another in Cornelius's palace under Peter, and another in Ephesus under Paul; and so Jew, Samaritan, Roman, and Greek, all had typical blessings.

We have noted examples of how new Pentecosts can be prayed into the life of the church in the stories of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley. Both of these men were Pentecostal producers. Dr. Edwards lived in prayer and his prayers brought forth power and his power brought forth Pentecost. His words were clothed with the living fire of the Holy Ghost. They swayed the hearts of men. His sermon at Enfield on "Sinners in the hand of an Angry God," is in point here. He read that sermon from manuscript and without a single gesture, yet its effect was almost unparalleled. Persons in the audience leaped to their feet in their attempt to control their emotions. It was Jonathan Edwards's prayers back of his sermon that made it a working-power and that brought to Enfield the great revival.

No less marked in the history of the church

was the life and preaching of John Wesley. He introduced an era of prayer among the people of God in England which gave birth to Methodism,—that mightiest movement of modern times. The Methodist church owes more to prayer than to any other single instrumentality. It is expected of a Methodist that if he can do nothing else he can at least pray. Let there be no mistake here. The humblest of God's people by using prayer as a working force can bring a new awakening to the church.

I remember hearing Mr. Moody more than once tell the following incident: In 1872 he went to London to rest. While resting he was overpersuaded to preach for one Sabbath. The place seemed cold and dead and Mr. Moody himself was only half up to the mark. But, when preaching, he suddenly awoke to find that the very atmosphere was charged with the Spirit of God. There came a hush upon the people which showed that God was searching their hearts. At the close of the sermon he felt impelled to ask those who

would like to become Christians to rise for prayer. To his astonishment, and that of the pastor, the whole congregation rose, and a work of grace began there and then. Hundreds were brought into the church. What was the secret of this? Mr. Moody thus gives it: "There were two sisters belonging to that church,—one was strong and the other was bed-ridden. One day as the sick woman was bemoaning her condition the thought came to her that she could pray, and she began to pray God to revive the church of which she was a member. Day and night the prayer went up to God but the church remained cold and dead. Reading of some of Mr. Moody's meetings in America she asked God to send him some day to her church. Her sister when she returned home from service that morning said, 'Well, who do you think preached for us to-day?' She guessed the names of several ministers who had been in the habit of exchanging with her pastor. Her sister then told her, 'It was Mr. Moody from America.' She turned pale and

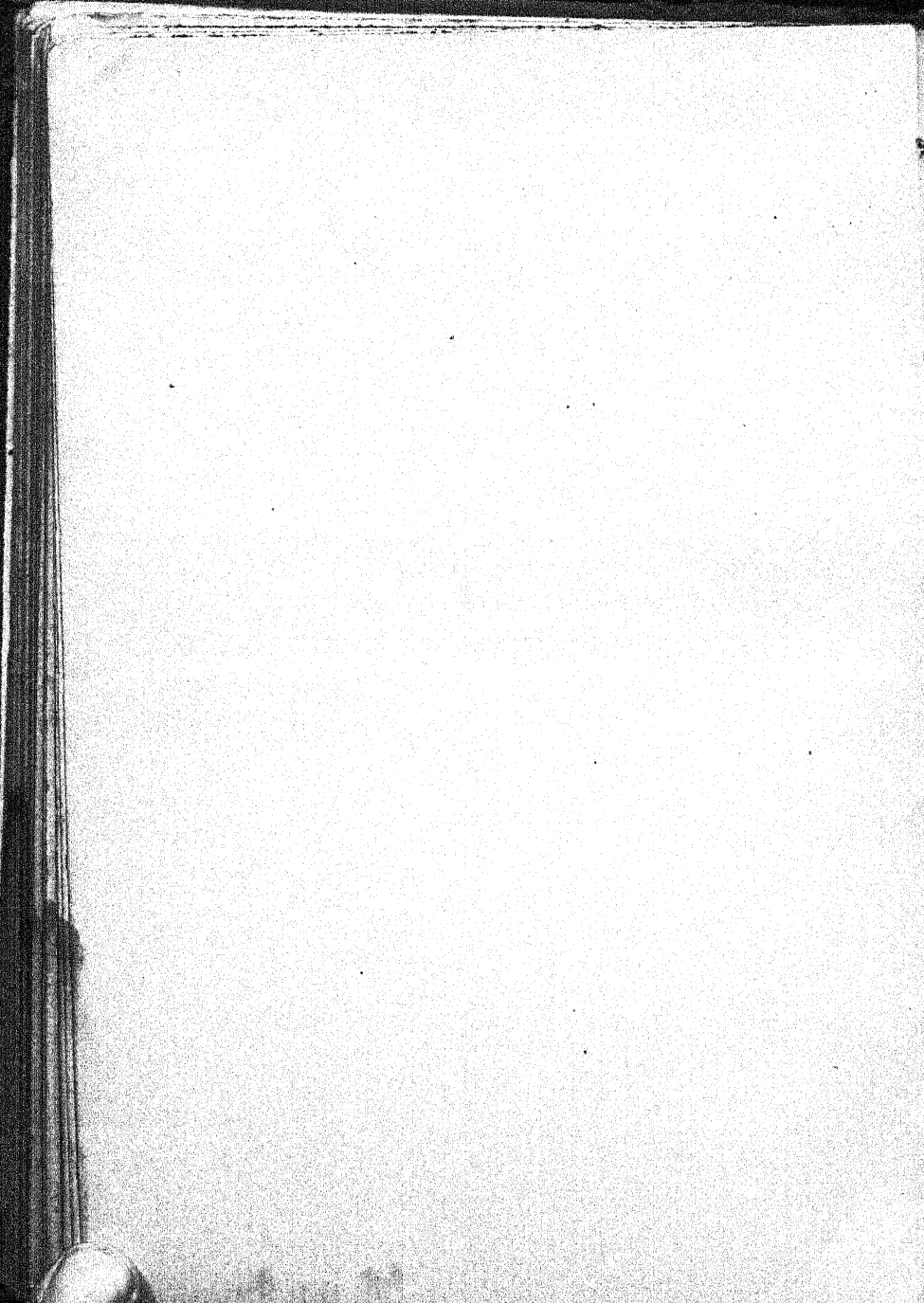
said, 'I know that that means God has heard my prayer.' All that afternoon she fasted and prayed and with the evening service came the answer, in fire from heaven. Perhaps very few in London ever knew that that woman existed. But God knew, and in answer to her prayer, brought a Pentecost to her church."

I have now presented my subject. It sets before us the high-water mark of Bible teaching relative to prayer. It shows us also where to find the cause of our spiritual breakdown as Christians and as a church. It shows us the point of leakage in spiritual power. It tells why we are in want. "We have not, because we ask not." Prayer is our most important means of grace yet it is of all the means of grace the most neglected. We are not working powers in the church because we are comparatively prayerless. Blessings are conditioned on prayer—"Ask and ye shall receive;" but we do not ask.

I call upon you to join the prayer-ranks of those who have been and are the working-

force of the Church of God. Write your names on the roll of honor with such men as Richard Baxter, Martin Luther, John Knox, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Edward Payson, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, and Dwight L. Moody.

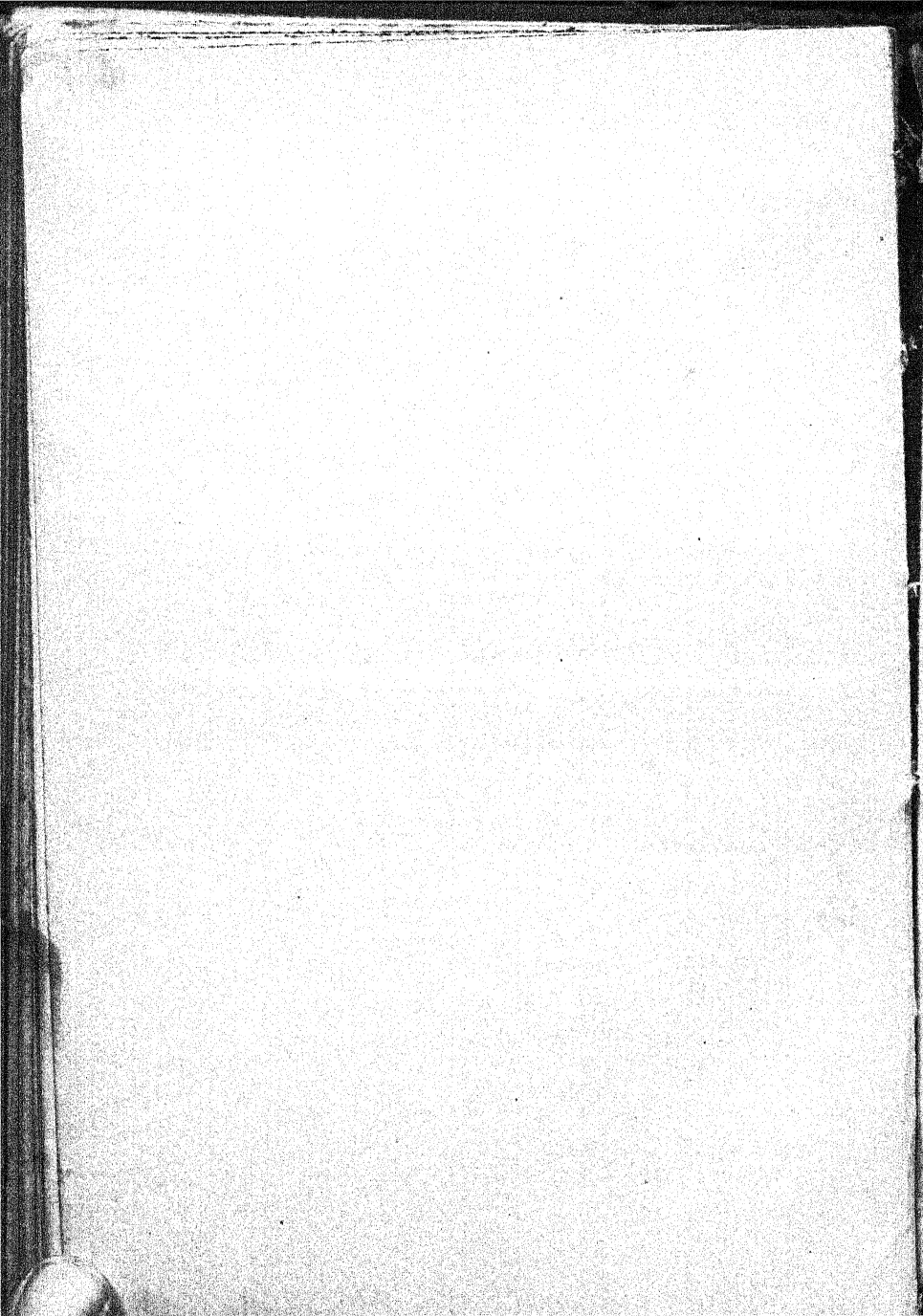
Brethren, we need a divine baptism of prayer. We need to inaugurate a new era of prayer. Let us not rest satisfied until God gives us this divine baptism and inaugurates, in our midst, this new era.



V

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN
THE LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP
BETWEEN CHRIST AND
CHRISTIANS

*"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of
the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from
the evil."—JOHN 17 : 15.*



V

PRAYER AS A WORKING-FORCE IN THE LIFE OF FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS

IT is a comfortable and a cheering thing to have some one praying for you. It heartens ; it acts as a tonic. It is added strength. It gives one the power of courage which comes from a sense of fellowship. It delivers one from a sense of loneliness and its consequents. Even a man as strong as Paul craved the prayers of others and felt more equal to his apostolic work because of what those prayers secured for him. Hence we find him writing to the Churches—" Brethren, pray for us."

You know how sons and daughters esteem the prayers of their fathers and mothers. If their parents should cease praying for them they would conclude that they had ceased to love them. They look upon their prayers as

their richest heritage; and they are. Name, if you can, blessings that are equal to the prayers of a father and mother. There are no other such blessings. They safeguard the sons and daughters, standing between them and temptation. They bring God into their lives and keep them in indissoluble union with Him. They put to the account of the children in the books which God keeps all the worth and all the credit which belonged to the parents. To have this is wealth indeed. Children do not begin to dream of half the gifts which God bestows on them for the sake of their devout fathers and mothers. Have you forgotten that phrase which occurs so often in the Bible—"For David thy father's sake," and the teaching which it carries in it?

Solomon sinned. He deserved to have the kingdom rent from him at once. But God said, "Notwithstanding, in thy day I will not do it for David thy father's sake." One hundred years and more after David had gone the way of all the earth, his posterity again so sinned that they deserved to be blotted out

from the face of the earth. Why were they not so blotted out? This is the answer: "Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant's sake."

It is a grand thing for children to have God upon their side for their father's sake and to be shielded by their father's prayers. I repeat the sentence with which I started out—it is a comfortable and a cheering thing to have some one praying for you. This being so, whom would you like to have praying for you? There is a difference in prayers, determined by the difference in the men who offer them. Whom would you like to have pray for you?

Here is a man who says, "I should choose Abraham." The choice is a good one, for, as we have already seen, that was a wonderful prayer which the patriarch offered when he looked towards doomed Sodom. That was skillful pleading. God spared Lot for Abraham's sake. The choice is a good one. Here is another man who says, "I should choose David." Any man may well choose David

after seeing the power that lies in the phrase, "for David's sake." There is One better than Abraham, and One better than David, who prays for us, and it is ours to choose that we may be enfolded in His strong prayers. There is a phrase in the divine Book that is stronger than "for David's sake." It is the phrase, "for Christ's sake." As we deal with God it is ours to secure all the power that lies in that phrase. It is ours, if we will, to have Christ praying for us and to have placed to our account, in the books of God, the unsearchable riches of His Grace.

We are wonderfully blessed here. As the people of God we not only know that Jesus Christ is praying for us but we know also just what He prays for. We know His ideals for us. We know the dangers He foresees in our pathway and against which He seeks to safeguard us. We know the purposes which He cherishes for us and the instrumentalities which He employs for the accomplishment of them. We know the mission which He has assigned us. We know what He wants rela-

tive to us and what He does not want. We know the future which He has blocked out for us—a future identical with His own glorious future.

We possess a veritable treasure in the Intercessory Prayer of the Master. It is the holy of holies in the divine Book. It lets us into the very core of the inner life of Jesus Christ. It is in the truest sense an accurate revelation of the will of God concerning us. It covers the eternities in its sweep, and includes all the ages. It carries in it the destiny of the Gospel and the welfare of the witnesses of Christ. Suppose for one moment that it had never been offered or had never been answered; what would have become of Christianity or the Church or the Gospel?

It is one of the perfect works of Jesus Christ. Like the Lord's Prayer it is not an extemporaneous affair; it is the result of all the Master's past thinking and living; it is the product of the great covenant of grace. We must never underestimate these master-

pieces of the Bible whether they come from Jesus or from His Apostles. They all mean effort, they all cost. John worked over his Apocalypse and his Gospel. Paul worked over his Epistles. Jesus worked over His Sermon on the Mount, His Valedictory Address and His Intercessory Prayer. All of these persons developed their masterpieces just as men do to-day. Masterpieces always mean life and work. Nothing but work tells. For thirty years Jesus Christ had been working up to this point of utterance and now that the time of utterance has been reached every year of the thirty tells. The prayer is an accumulation, a growth, the sum-total of Himself and of His all.

It is not, however, with the full Intercessory Prayer of the Master that we are called to deal at this time, but with only a small fragment, one petition—the petition which safeguards us from the evil in the world in which we dwell: “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” This was a great

request which Jesus made of the Father. I do not know of any request that asks more. To realize this, consider the reign of evil here, and the power of the god of this world. Evil is the ascendant principle. It presses all into its service—the greatest talent and the loftiest genius. It adorns itself. The thrill of music and the beauty of art are some of its attractions. It makes great promises. It offers gratification to the senses, social power, secular wealth, great fame, and commanding position. Thus it is calculated to deceive the very elect.

What greater prayer could Christ offer? What prayer could tax the Grace of God more than this—"Keep them from the evil of this world"?

Here is one who says, "I can suggest a greater prayer, a greater tax upon God." Well, what is it? He answers, "This is it: Father give them an instantaneous translation to the pure world above where they shall know and feel sin no more forever." I put it to you, is that a greater prayer than the

prayer of the Master? Does it put the Grace of God to a greater tax? Henry Drummond considers this very question in his last book, "The Ideal Life"; and he answers it in the negative. He says, there is an old poem which bears the striking and curious title of "Strife in Heaven." What is the strife about? About this very question of ours. The poet supposes himself to be walking the streets of the New Jerusalem, when he comes to a crowd of saints engaged in very earnest discussion. He draws near and listens. The question they are discussing is, "Who amongst us is the greatest monument of God's saving grace?" After a long debate in which each states his case separately and each claims to be by far the most wonderful trophy of God's love, it is finally agreed to settle the matter by a vote. Vote after vote was taken until the list of competitors was reduced to but two. These were allowed to state their case again and then the company stood ready to take the final vote. The first to speak was a very old man and he began by

saying that it was a mere waste of time to go any further. It was absolutely impossible for God to do any more for any man than He had done for him. He told the story of his life. It was a wicked life, a life filled with every conceivable indulgence and marred with every crime. He had been a thief, a liar, a blasphemer, a drunkard, and a murderer. On his death-bed at the eleventh hour, God's Grace came and redeemed him and translated him instantaneously to heaven. The other speaker was also a very old man. His story was that he had been brought to God when a boy, had lived a Christian life fourscore years, had been exposed to sin in all its forms, but he had been enabled to live amid this exposure an unfallen life. His character was a holy light shining in the darkness of the world's worst life. Men looked up to him as their conscience. He became so well known in the community that all iniquity hid its face in his presence.

When the vote was taken what was the result? The second man got every vote cast.

The old poet was a man of insight and knew the deeper truth. His poem tells us that the first man's salvation required only one great act of God, but the second man's salvation required a whole series of great acts of God. It was a multiplied salvation, a lifelong salvation. The first man was saved from the guilt of sin but the second man was saved from the power of sin as well as from its guilt. All that was saved in the first man was simply himself. In the second man not only was the man himself saved but his life was saved also. Better let the prayer of the Master stand just as it is. It cannot be improved. In His prayer to the Father He makes for us the greatest possible request. He asks God to save not only ourselves but our lives and to make our lives effective powers for the salvation of others.

There is a great and fundamental truth just here, one which we ought to keep always in the light. It is that Christ wants our saved lives as well as our saved selves. He has a mission down here in this world for saved

lives. He wants them lived right in the midst of sin and of sinful men as a rebuke to sin, and as a revelation of how men may be saved through and by Him, and as a standing invitation to come unto Him and be saved, and as an exponent of His redeeming grace, and as a type of what men can be and ought to be, and as a reproduction of Himself and of His life among men. Christ has a mission for His people in this world and the world needs this mission truly fulfilled. The world needs Christians now just as formerly it needed Jesus Christ Himself. That is the reason Jesus says, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world." The saved Peter has a work to do for the Master and for the world. He is not ready to go yet; he must stay and lead on the day of Pentecost. The saved John has a work to do for the Master and for the world. He is not ready to go yet; he must stay and write the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel. The saved Paul has a work to do for the Master and for the world. He is not ready to go yet; he

must stay and write his Epistles and found and organize Christian churches, and give the Gospel a new setting, a new statement, and a new start. He must stay and evolve from the story of the Christ the great fundamental doctrines which are wrapped up in that story. If these men of the early days had been taken out of the world on the day of their conversion, who would have written the New Testament, and who would have organized the Christian church? If Augustine and Calvin had been translated at the beginning of their Christian career, where would be the world's great system of Christian theology? If Luther had been called above the moment he found Jesus Christ, what would have become of the great reformation? As Christians we are here with a mission just as was the Master Himself and it is our mission here to continue Him and His saving work. As John the disciple of Love puts it, "As He is, so are we in the world."

What was Christ's mission here? Answer that question and you answer the question

what is our mission here. His mission was to keep Himself in unimpeded contact with God on the one hand, and to keep Himself in unimpeded contact with sinful men on the other hand; and bring the two together, God and man, and so save man. His was a mediatorial mission, one of salvation. That is our mission also. We are to keep in unimpeded contact with God and also with sinners, and so bring God and sinners together, that sinners may be saved. Our first master-passion in life is to live in unbroken communion with God and our second is to spend ourselves in seeking and saving the lost. We are to be mediators between God and the lost. We are to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are to be here as a redeeming agency. We are to be Christ-centres. We are to be Christs. "As He is so are we in the world." If we are true to ourselves we can be all this. When this prayer of Jesus in our behalf is fully answered we shall be all this. We shall be in this world, but not of this world. We shall be Nazarenes. We

shall be instructors. We shall be leaders. We shall be sources of new spiritual life. We shall be living Gospels. Men will feel the power of the impact of our life upon their life and as a result there will be convictions, conversions, and confessions among those with whom we dwell.

I found a striking type of the true Christian the other day in my reading. It is a species of the palm-tree which grows in South America. All travellers are enthusiastic over it. They call it the rain-tree. This tree has the remarkable power of attracting in a wondrous degree, atmospheric moisture, which it condenses and drops on the earth in refreshing dew. It grows straight up in the parched and arid desert, and distributes its daily showers. The result is that around it an oasis of luxuriant vegetation soon springs up. The flood-gates of heaven refuse to open, the fountains cease to flow, the rivers shrivel and evaporate—all true; but the rain-tree getting its moisture from above renews the garden which it has created about it

and gives the weary traveller shade and fruit, a new life and a delightful rest. The true Christian living in vital and indissoluble relations to God is a rain-tree in this desert world. He masters that part of the world in which his lot is cast and turns it into a garden of the Lord.

While a true Christian is all this and while he is to the world Christ over again, the fact to be emphasized is that he becomes what he is and reaches his controlling influence among men through and by means of a spiritual separation from the world. His influence tells with men because while he is in the world, he is not of the world. He has his power just as Christ had His. Christ's power was His separateness. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He did not withdraw Himself from the world but lived in the very midst of it. For thirty years He was surrounded by the influences and agencies of evil just as we are. He was brought into the closest possible external association with the wickedness of the world.

No man ever came into such close external contact with the devil, the source of evil, as did Christ. Jesus was not a recluse, not a hermit. He was social, mingling with men. He walked with them on their highways, sailed with them in their fishing boats, feasted with them in their homes; He ate with publicans and sinners, He dined with Zaccheus. He did not stand aloof from the people with cold indifference. In the largest sense He was "in the world." Yet He kept intact His separateness from the world. In every place and at all times He was Himself. He was Jesus. Men felt this. This was His power. His was not the separateness of condition but the separateness of character. Conventionalities had no power over Him but He had power over conventionalities. The world's opinions were no authority with Him, He Himself was an authority. He brought a grace into the world that was not of it. He was everywhere manifestly superior to sin. Even the prince of this world when he tempted Him, learned that he had no point

of moral contact with Him, no point of seizure, nothing upon which he could successfully lay hold. Men felt the distance between Jesus and themselves,—that His was a different doctrine, a different ambition, a different spirit, a different love and a different life. He borrowed nothing from men, He was a different manner of man from them. He was not on their spiritual level, hence they were awed in His presence, searched, convicted, condemned. They felt that in Him they had found a higher and a finer nature than theirs. The money-changers in the temple felt this, Pilate felt it, the soldiers felt it, His disciples felt it. This feeling was universal. "In the world and yet not of the world"—that is the explanation of the regenerative power of Jesus Christ. He Himself felt His separateness and He lived it. It was an instinct with Him. He was one with God and not one with the world. It was this recognized fact that made Him an authority among men. His whole ministry was a ministry of separation. He never could have impressed the world by

being homogeneous with it. His power to convict, to renovate, to sanctify, and to save, consisted in the sublime holiness of His life and in His complete separateness from all sin.

In the secret of Christ's power we see the secret of our power. That is if we are to have any power in the world we must become partakers of His holiness, we must be separated with Him and be kept separated and set apart to the same great life. This is what He asks the Father for us in His Intercessory Prayer. We can succeed only as He succeeded, so He asks that we may be as He was. He asks that the life which we live may be so holy that its impact upon men will save men. He asks that we shall be kept different from the men of the world, for this is our power. It is a shame when a man of the world can put himself side by side with us and truthfully say,

"My life is just as good as their life, and therefore their religion is no better than my worldliness." It is ours to condemn the world and not to be condemned by it. It is ours so

to live that our contemporaries living in sin shall be smitten with shame by our example. Our holiness should be of such vitality and assertiveness as to compel confession and repentance upon the part of the men of the world. Our Christian lives should be such as to give a new ethical background for the souls of men to see themselves by. Do sins flourish before our face? If so that does not argue well for our Christian living. Do doubts and perplexities trouble the men who associate with us? If so, that is a poor testimony to the potency of our personal religion. It is a reflection on our living. We should live so as to produce faith in others. Do you know that we Christians are responsible for a great many of the evils in the world? If we lived as we should they would not be. They would hide their heads and die. I have known a youth from the country to enter an office in the city where the daily conversation was so soiled and profane that it would have disgraced the slums. But a month after his arrival not a man in the place dared to utter

an impure word when he was present. What made the change? His life. He did not speak a single syllable of reproof. He simply lived in the dignity of his Christian holiness and his manly purity. That quelled conscious iniquity. A holy and a separate life always tells.

Let me ask a closing question: How does God answer the Intercessory Prayer of the Master and thus protect us from evil? There are two answers to this question. The first is that given by Dr. Watkinson of England. It is this, (1) *He puts in us "the instinct of peril."* By this we are kept warned against the evil of the world. Now to be warned is to be armed. This instinct of peril is a wonderful faculty. Birds have it, quadrupeds have it, even butterflies have it. Through it they get mysterious warnings and a chance to migrate or to hide and in this way save their lives. For example, in India butterflies migrate to escape the monsoon. They have a meteorological sense, which gives them an intimation of low-pressure and warns them to

haste away. In like manner God gives to all sincere men a similar instinct for moral peril:—a sensibility of sin, a pain to feel it near. Goethe sets this forth in his tragedy of Faust. In that tragedy Margaret who represents virgin purity cannot bear the sight of Mephistopheles. Though he is disguised as an honorable knight and she has no idea who he is, she shrinks from him. She has a keen instinct of moral peril,

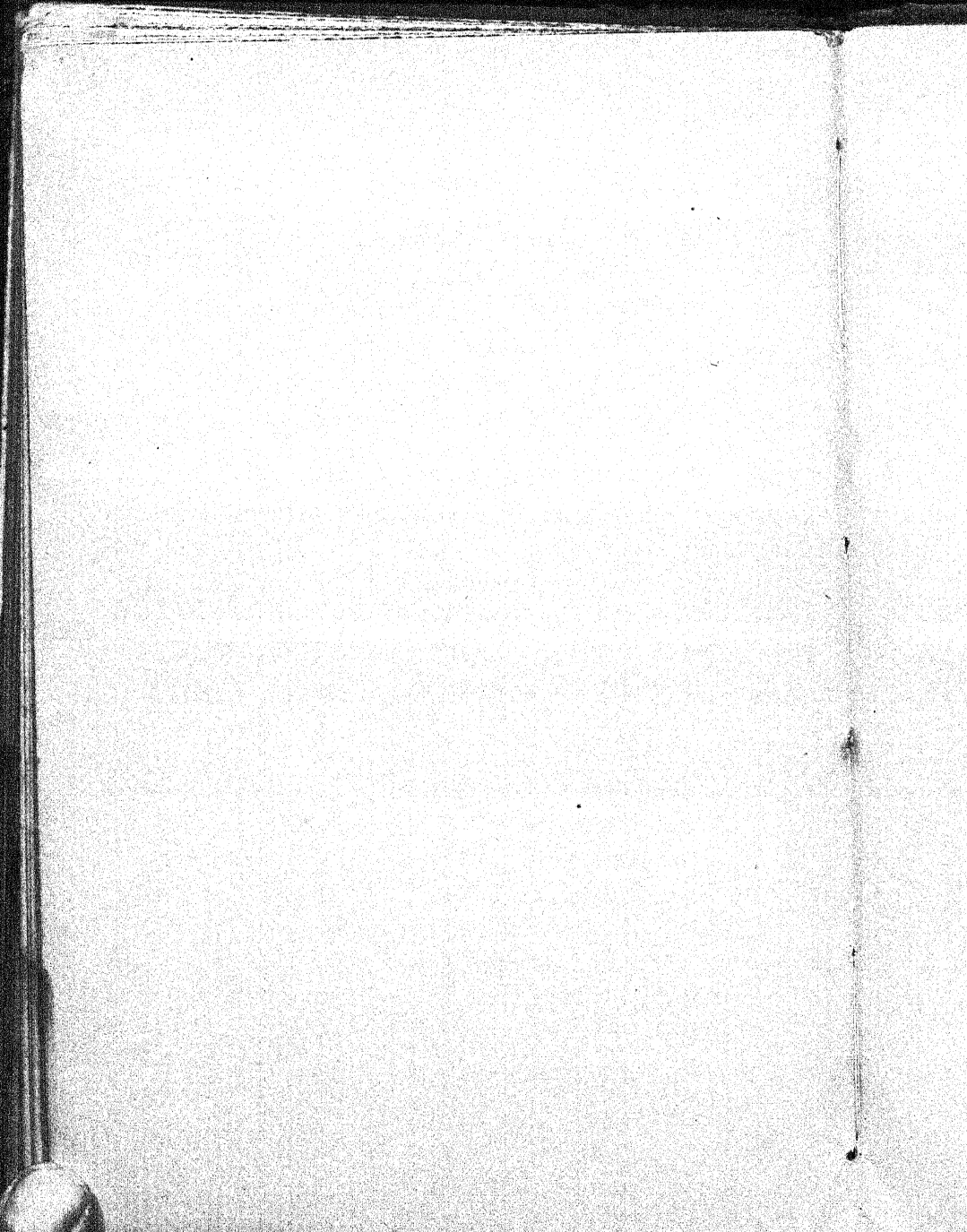
" In all my life not anything
Has given my heart so sharp a sting
As that man's loathsome visage."

You begin to read a certain book, as Dr. Watkinson says, and you do not like it. You suspect it morally. It is certainly not high in its tone. You cannot put your objection into words but the shrinking from it is there. That is the action of the instinct of peril. Drop the book at once. Your separation to God in this case lies in following the instinct. Guard the bloom on the peach. It is essential; for just where the bloom is rubbed off, at that precise point decay sets in. Honor

the instinct of peril and remember this: In a life of holiness there is no place for presumption.

(2) *God grants us a hidden life filled with Himself.* By this also we are kept. This lifts us in our spirit into the heavenlies. This makes God Himself our atmosphere and we carry our atmosphere with us wherever we go. This atmosphere is proof against all infection and to breathe it is constant health. This makes a robust soul and a robust soul is safe anywhere and everywhere. This makes us safe from within, and hence safe from everything without. This makes us as safe as God Himself. This clothes us in white, down here on earth, and also keeps our robes unspotted from the world. This makes us independent of environment. The man whose life is hid with Christ in God makes his own environment. My point is that if we who are Christians are to be what we would like to be, we must cooperate with God in nurturing and fostering this hidden life and in making it our all and in all while here in this world. If

you are willing to do this the prayer of the Master for you will be answered and you will be kept holy and separated unto God and made a saving power among your fellow-men. "And now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to preserve you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty and dominion and power both now and ever. Amen."



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